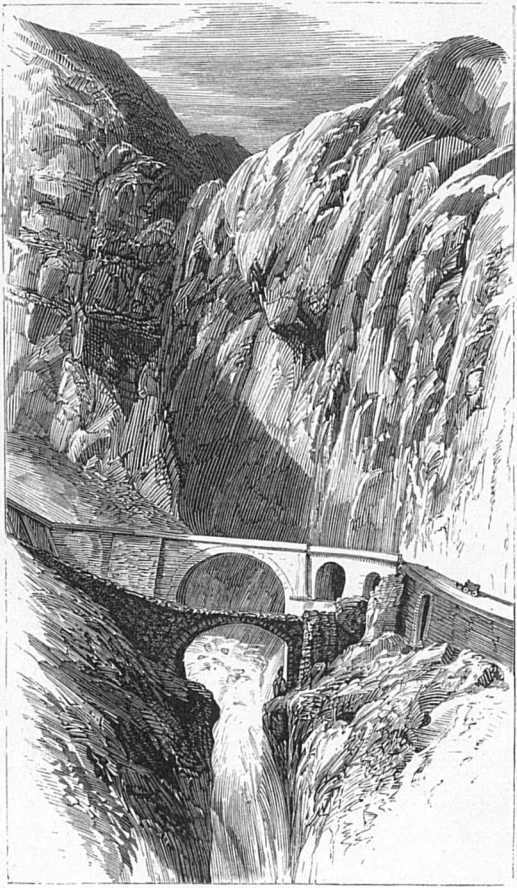

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE.

THE

REGULAR SWISS ROUND

In Three Trips

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PREFACE.

THE following little book has grown out of the Journal of the First Trip, which was used in lectures for our Reading Room at St. Luke's, and then published in the 'Leisure Hour,' under the title of "The Regular Swiss Round." The Second Trip served the same purposes, and the Third, after doing duty at our Institute, is now printed for the first time.

All are carefully revised, and as the record of the two trips which appeared separately were found useful by some tourists and pleasant by friends who stayed at home, I hope that their united publication may prove equally acceptable.

These little trips in a hackneyed route were simply rest from grave, anxious work in which I am engaged from one summer's holiday to another. I desire therefore to say that I write merely as a common tourist, who walked the "Regular Swiss Round" for sheer recreation.

I desire to thank the Proprietors of the 'Leisure Hour' for their kind permission to reprint so much of the following volume as appeared in its pages.

HARRY JONES.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN complying with the demand for another edition of this little book, I beg to repeat that it professes to record only the impressions received in tours familiar to thousands who seek annual recreation in Switzerland.

H. J.

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FIRST TRIP.

I.—LONDON TO BASLE.

I DIDN'T go; I was taken, and it came about thus. For some months I had been much engaged; and though anxious work has pleasures which the idler may envy, but can never enjoy, it tires the heartiest and strongest at last. I was worn and cross, and fancied myself ill—the worst of maladies. My heart was sick, my food tasteless. The cabs in the street seemed to make more noise on purpose, while passing my door. I subdued three or four organ-men, by threatening them, in very broken Italian, out of the window. My wife said I wanted a change—as if I didn't know that—so I said to her at the time. One day, while I was unusually worried and snappish, my friend J. happened to call, and mentioned, among other things, that he was going to start for the "Regular Swiss Round" the next day. "Will you come?" he added; "nothing absurd in

climbing—no romance—beaten tract—procession of cockneys. Will you come?"

My good wife used her opportunity, packed my carpet-bag, and the next evening saw J. and me in the express train, shrieking (I refer to the train) out of the station at London Bridge. We left town directly after dinner, and walked the plank into the 'Undine' steamer at Dover about eleven o'clock. At a quarter past eleven, J., who had been for some time looking over the side, turned round to me and said with grim but indomitable pleasantry, "This boat is well named the Un-dine." The pier head of Calais seemed to meet us by the time we had got halfway across the Channel. Then came Calais itself, still dark, with blinking lights and red trousers half awake. A mouthful at the buffet—and railroad again.

I must say that Frenchmen know how to build comfortable carriages, though they do make unnecessary fuss about tickets and luggage, and many little regulations, galling to a British grumbler. The provoking coolness with which French railway porters examine and sort your baggage, letting you touch nothing till the whole van has been emptied, and the packages arranged alphabetically, is only less annoying than their demand to be paid for it, permitted by the regulations of the

railway. Indeed, I believe the porters are expected to live on the passengers.

But now we are in the train. Presently the sun rises upon "la belle France," and discovers French scenes. I have heard very wise people sometimes wonder at the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman, as if neighbours were always alike. They are near to each other, have many interests in common, but are, withal, exactly unlike, especially the Frenchman. The first view, when one wakes in the Paris train, establishes the fact; little men in blue, pottering at little fields without hedges; women standing guard at the railway crossings, and poplars in single file. There are no lanes, no cows visible, there at least —nothing but pigs and poultry. The villages look like slips of town which have been planted out in the country, but won't grow; the agriculture seems to be very superficial; the people tickle the earth and scratch it. There are no solid homesteads, with powerful teams of plough-horses—no piles of stacks—no farmyards where the cattle stand knee-deep in straw, munching abundant fodder, while the pigeons wheel above their heads. No; this, and a very large part of France besides, is naked and dreary, though covered with countless crops—comfortless as a showy French drawing-room with its artificial flowers and clocks that don't go.

One thought came into my head as I whisked in the train through countless scraps of fields. Suppose—which may we never see—there should be war between England and France, which would suffer most? If the worst were to come to the worst, these poor peasants have a retreat which is denied to ours. When wages are affected, when commerce is shaken and enterprise checked, the labourer in England is thrown out of work—into what? Too often into the workhouse or the gaol. But here, in France, he has a patch of land. That will help him to tide over a pinch. The minute subdivision of property no doubt hinders the outlay of capital; but it provides a refuge which capital does not. The Frenchman, sore pressed, out of work, may fall back on his paternal onion-plot, hide and shelter himself in the paternal hut till the sun shines again, and he can chirp once more.

But we are getting near Paris, where much has lately been done to improve the larger features of the place, to the disturbance of local independence among the poor, who have been sorely driven about by the alterations made by the present Emperor in the streets. We arrived at the terminus at ten o'clock, and when we had got the luggage, started off. No little matter that, getting our luggage, I can assure you; for J. had a ham sewn tight up

in canvass, which he was bringing as a present to a friend; and which, though it smelt like a ham, and felt like a ham, was not done up as that joint is in France, and might have been an explosive machine—might have had latent strength enough within it to overturn the constitution—at least a French one. So J. had to explain, and we were delayed. When we got clear, we drove at once to the house of a friend of his, who was to accompany us on the Regular Swiss Round, but found that he had just gone out. Then we drove to our hotel, and found that he had done just the same thing there. Indeed we spent the day in crossing each other on the road, and arriving everywhere ten minutes too late, dinner included; and let me observe, that late comers at a table d'hôte dinner are intolerable. When some forty or fifty people have started fair, and all got over their soup together, is it to be borne that a fresh batch should sit down and drag the retreating tureens in again, as it were by the tail? No; so, on the principle of doing as we should be done by, we adjourned to a restaurant. Now let me give a hint. When a small party dines at a restaurant, by the card, don't let each order a dish for himself; for one portion is generally enough for two, sometimes for three. Thus you get a greater and more wholesome variety of dinner at a less expense.

Returning to our inn, where at last we found our friend P., we gave directions to be called early the next morning, and to have a cab ready to take us to the rail. Rising in good time, we walked down into the courtyard of the hotel, and asked for the special cab. The porter shrugged his shoulders, affected to made minute inquiries, and abused the boots. Soon it appeared that a trap had been set to catch us, and a number of other travellers, who had been scalding their throats with early coffee, and were then standing by their corded luggage in the yard, waiting for the vehicles they had ordered over night. Did we miss the train we should have to stay another day at the hotel. The minute-hand of the yard clock hurried on; there was not a moment to be lost. With a promptitude which augured well for our skill in any emergencies, we forebore recrimination, and dispersed to get what we could.

Fortunately J. managed to catch an aimless empty omnibus, which had been out apparently all night, and lumbered with it triumphantly into the inn yard. Up with the luggage—nothing of a load—and away we rattled like a large box with three pills in it, to the terminus of the Swiss rail-road, leaving the rest of the group angry with one another at having stood there to express their anger at the hotel people, instead of seeing,

as we had done, what they could do for themselves.

Paris was being stripped of her glory—a grand fête was just over. The illuminated lamps were out, and looked very French in the bright morning sun. The gilded eagles and sham cannon, which had adorned several conspicuous spots, were being taken away in carts and wheelbarrows. The red cloth was stripped from off the grand stands, and thus the rough stratum which had underlaid beauty, glory, and fashion, was bare; which thing is an allegory.

There are several routes into Switzerland through France. Many prefer them to that up the Rhine; for there you do not get the immediate plunge into Alpine scenery, to which an express railway journey over an uninteresting country provides the pleasantest contrast. Of the routes through France, I almost think I prefer that *viâ* Mulhausen to Basle, as being shortest and ugliest. The line by Pontarlier and Dôle, which lands you in Switzerland at Neuchatel, is in many respects a very fine one, but when once you have seen the view from the Jura above that town, you have to travel some time before you get fairly among the mountains. If you go by Strasburg, you must stop to see the cathedral, and, as a gentleman in our carriage seemed to think, better still, to eat *pâtés de foie*

gras—the delicacy for which the town is famous—patties or pies made of diseased goose liver. The unlucky birds are kept here in large quantities, and plied with stimulants to make them hungry, when they over-eat themselves, in some cases so successfully, that their livers attain the weight of two or even three pounds. I am not a professed epicure. I don't know *pâtés de foie gras* when I see them; and so, once for all, dismiss the hope that I am going to tickle your tongue with any juicy description of food. Read a cookery-book if you want to be learned in dishes. I cannot enlighten you. But I could not help thinking of the feathered geese being compelled to disorder their livers against their will, in order that the unfeathered geese might (not unwittingly) disorder *theirs*. Strasburg, however, has a cathedral, as well as patties, and never was I more struck on entering any building, than once, when I first set foot within this. It was a late, bright afternoon; the sunshine slid through the painted windows in long bars of colours, and paved the stone floor with changing mosaic. Recesses in the church showed still and dark—some were almost black—while the ruby, the green, and the blue of those windows which did not look towards the sun, but had only the bright afternoon sky behind them, shone and coruscated as if they had been gems.

All the glass in the church is stained. The tracery of the stone is clear and sharp; the pillars (I speak unprofessionally) stand up with such elegance and strength that I felt—I will not say the triumph of Gothic Art, for I didn't think anything about art at all, which I take to be no bad compliment to Irwin of Steinbach, the designer of what I saw—I felt glad, thankful, thinking, as I said, nothing of art, till the beadle, coming up tiptoe behind, lest I should shy, and carry away his anticipated franc, asked me whether I would not like to see the famous clock. Down fell the whole fabric of my thought—the beadle levelled it with a touch—I was a mere excursionist, and represented a "tip." A plague on the clock! May it be unwound for ages; may it be gritty and sticky with old oil; may earwigs get into its tenderest vitals, and rot consume its catgut! The cathedral being suddenly demolished, I was led passively to see the clock. It shows the hour, day of week and of month, the month, the year, besides other epochs, and has quite a household of images, which come out of their holes at the quarters, and walk in procession, and do all kinds of metallic performances, till they stop in a jerky, wiry sort of way, and bide their time again. In the beadle's eye the cathedral was nothing but a case or cover to the clock.

Of course if you go *viâ* Strasburg you must see both of these; all very well if you do so returning, but when you have made up your mind to Switzerland, when you look hour after hour at the dusty road, and see the hot shimmer rise from the sun-baked soil, and then think of the coming sight of ice, of "snow in harvest," you don't fancy having your journey "broken." No, you wish to hurry on; and so, if you really want to enjoy your visit to Strasburg, take it coming home, not on your way to the Alps.

The route *viâ* Geneva is not a bad one; you go through from Paris, without change of carriage, in fifteen hours; but then you get some pretty scenery on your way, as through Strasburg. You have the edge of your Swiss hunger endangered. But if the weather be bright, and you can see Mont Blanc from Geneva, especially if you go on by Sallenches the next day to Chamouni, having the giant in full view part of the time, the approach by Geneva is grand. I would not advise any one, however, who intends to walk, to approach the beaten tracks by the Lake and Vevey. Vevey should be kept to the last—luxurious Vevey, with its famous hotel, and music on the lake, and gorgeous views from beneath the trees on the terrace by the water-side!

I have already mentioned the route by Pontar-

lier to Neuchatel, from which place the railway branches off right and left to Lausanne and Berne. It affords easy access to either side of Switzerland. By this way you come full on a magnificent Swiss view over the Jura. This is undoubtedly the most striking approach. You turn off the old Geneva line at Dijon; for some time the scenery has the main characteristics of French ugliness, but as the line approaches the Jura it becomes picturesque. Directly you reach the highest part and can see the other side, the whole range from Mont Blanc to the Oberland peaks is laid before you, with the lake of Neuchatel in the foreground. On a fine day this view is magnificent, and far exceeds any other to be met with in approaching Switzerland. This railroad will eventually be a chief Italian route, by Lausanne, Vevey, the valley of the Rhone, the Simplon, Lago Maggiore, and Milan.

We got to our station at Paris in good time, and started in high spirits at having checkmated the people at the hotel. The road, as I said, was dull. We passed many small towns, saw many small soldiers and rather seedy-looking ecclesiastics, admired the hats and luggage of the natives, especially their tight boxes with iron handles, and strips of wood nailed on them; we refreshed ourselves at several buffets, until at last we left the

soil of France and passed into the Swiss system of railroads. The change was marked by the sounding of a feeble little horn, with a sound like that made by a comb and paper, which squeaked at starting,

Basle, which we reached in the evening, is a quaint, irregular town, with high roofs of rich-brown weather-tinted tiles, and is presided over by a cathedral built of deep-red sandstone. This gives a warmth to the place, which is at the same time fresh-looking and antique. We put up at an hotel where we were shown into rooms over-looking the river. Very pleasent was it, after the hot August day, spent in screaming through clouds of dust, accross a flat, dry-looking country, to sit there over the cool Rhine, rushing and eddying past beneath our windows with a delicious watery "swirl"—pleasant, after the racket and the pace, to sit there over the swift, bright-green river, looking out on distant hills, and to say one to another, "Here we are in Switzerland at last."

We were three—a capital number, because on putting any proposal to the vote, it is always carried by an overwhelming majority, the defeated member feeling himself in a minority of one. Three is a better number than five. This, it is true, provides for a majority on a division, but the opposition may be disagreeable; the government,

however changed, can never be strong enough; moreover, it is often impossible to find shelter for five where three could be taken in. Again, five involves two horses—not always to be got—whenever the party drives, while three, with knapsacks, if they want a lift, can get a ride, all together, in one of the little one-horse chaises of the country.

We were three, and, I may say had no disagreement whatever during our round; not but that we sometimes referred a proposal to a committee of the whole house, and divided, two to one, The one submits, I have known the "one" plead eloquently for his motion before the votes were taken, but afterwards he never objected.

When we had dined, we walked out to reconnoitre Basle, and strolled through the streets, where we enjoyed the first reminiscences, now for some time interrupted, of foreign provincial sights and shops, the latter with wonderfully bad glass in the windows, and a large majority of tobacconists. After prowling through the town, we went up to Die Pfalz, a terrace close to the cathedral, planted with chesnut-trees some seventy or eighty feet above the river, and affording a beautiful view of distant hills. Here we lounged and looked till the sun, after lighting the old towers of the cathedral bravely up, seemed to quicken his pace, and went away. Fresh rolls of smoke came out of the

town chimney-pots, as if supper was being prepared, the fires having been let die out, this hot harvest weather, during the day. The air crept up chill from the river, and we returned to our inn, where we sat some time, finally arranging our route. J., who was leader, said the best round was the Bernese Oberland, from Lucerne; then the neighbourhood of Thun and Interlachen; then over the Gemmi, across the valley of the Rhone to Zermatt; then round Mont Blanc to Chamouni; then over the Tête Noire, or one of the neighbouring passes, to Vevey, and so home by Geneva. Thus, he told us, we should take in all the characteristic scenery of Switzerland, and be within reach of the more ambitious walks in case we should feel inclined to attempt them. This route, moreover, enabled us to send our carpet-bags on in advance, so as to provide us with a refit, three or four times on our tour. For this purpose the arrangements in Switzerland are very convenient; there is a baggage post, which for a moderate price takes care that your portmanteau shall meet you at the best resting-places on your wanderings.

So in good time we turned in to bed, and the pleasant wash of the river below our windows soon helped to send us off into the land where stranger tours are sometimes taken than among the wildest Alps.

II.—BASLE TO LUCERNE.

WE went by a slow train from Basle to Lucerne, and thus the journey, though short in distance, was long in time. It was the slowest train I ever was in. Well, we had no need to hasten, as we did not intend to go beyond Lucerne that night, and it was well that we did not, for the train stopped, not only at all the stations, but several times between them. A facetious fellow-traveller kept putting his head out of the window at these delays, and professed to give reasons for them. "Now," says he, "the stoker's hat has blown off—now he has got down to gather some strawberries —now he is lighting his pipe—now he has stopped to drink some beer." But to speak for ourselves, the halts were long enough at the stations for refreshment. Pleasant-looking girls came out with trays full of glasses of beer ready poured out, cool, bright, and frothy. Some of this Swiss beer is excellent, being light and bitter. There was a good deal of it consumed in the carriage next ours, where they had a fiddle, and much conversation, the women knitting all the while, The carriages were very long, and, like the American, had a highway—a sort of main street, or backbone, the whole length of the train—up and down which

the guards passed, examining our tickets by the way, and occasionlly looking in to see that all was right. Almost everybody smoked; so did the engine. As it burnt coal, not coke, and we travelled in the direction of, and at about the same pace as the wind, we progressed in a steady downfall of "blacks" the whole way. Let it be remembered that this professed to be a slow train. The Swiss have done so much more than some of their neighbours in the making of railroads, that they deserve every praise. Down to the year 1855, the only railway in Switzerland was a short line from Zurich to Baden, a village in the neighbourhood. In the next three years there were seven or eight lines open. This is very creditable, considering the number of local interests there are in this country. For many years they hindered almost every attempt to introduce the locomotive; but 1848, which shook Europe, set up a fresh action in Switzerland, which still spreads. Though the country is hilly, it is not a very difficult one to the railway engineer, as the lines follow the valleys, where alone they can find merchandise and passengers to carry. In a few years the Alps themselves will probably be crossed by two railroads, one over the Simplon, the other under the Mount Cenis. Every season the tourist finds the iron track creeping further and further up the

valleys, and fresh places linked together with a band of steam.

As we travelled towards Lucerne, we were reminded of the well-known grass which bears its name, by the immense amount of hay which is grown here. A clever system of irrigation, aided by a hot sun, often enables the farmers to get three crops off the same field during the summer. Hay and grass are the principal produce of Switzerland. The lower mountains are covered with sweet herbage and sometimes grazed to the very edge of the glaciers—indeed the word Alp means "mountain pasturage"—while many of the valleys, such as those of Les Ormonds, are devoted entirely to dairy produce.

We noticed that there were no haystacks, the hay being put at once into well-ventilated chalets, or barns, one of which stands on every plot. Now, as these are built on the same plan as the dwelling-houses, being hardly distinguishalbe from them at some little distance, the country has the appearance of being much more thickly peopled than it is. The road frequently seems to lie for hours through a scattered village, while in reality not one building in ten is inhabited.

In 1850 the population of the whole country, towns and all, was something over two millions. The proportion of Protestants to Romanists is

about that of seven to five. There are three distinct languages—German, French, and Italian; besides strong dialects, which are horrible mixtures of them all. Spreading from Hampstead Heath—within the sound of one big bell—traversed hourly by the same omnibuses—toiling under the same cloud of smoke—reading the same 'Times'—is a population greater than that spread over the fourteen thousand square miles of Switzerland. But the Swiss are knit by a stronger bond than that of either language or numbers—they are free; they can go about without hindrance, live where they like, and grumble whenever they please. Of course this freedom produces there as it does in other places, a great amount of local discord and religious dissension. Where there is no enforced uniformity, there "many men" will show "many minds." All the better, we English think. People can't understand one another without some misunderstanding. Give us honest opinions fearlessly uttered, though they do make a little noise sometimes, rather than affected unanimity, calm as sleep, but dangerous as disease.

How the Swiss came to be free is hard to say in a few words; but they probably owe their present freedom from continental interference as much to the nature of their country as to anything

else. Tyrants of all kinds, whether represented by the mob or the monarch, are compelled to leave those alone whom they cannot get at. Some people think that universal suffrage makes Switzerland free, but universal up and down hill has more to do with it. You can't conquer a country thoroughly without a flat place to do it on. Advance against your Swiss and they whisk up hill or round a corner while you are getting your range. At any rate, their liberty is of the right sort—home-grown—and therefore likely to last.

But we must have done with all these cogitations, for the train is drawing near to Olten. Olten is a great centre of railroads; lines branch off to Berne, Zurich, and Lucerne. We had to change carriages, and got our lunch at the same time. For this I had a large, dry, tough sandwich, which tasted like a piece of gutta-percha between two slices of cork.

Into the train again, and off we crawled to Lucerne. As we drew near, we passed the Lake of Sempach, the road running close to the reeds, which grow at the water's edge.

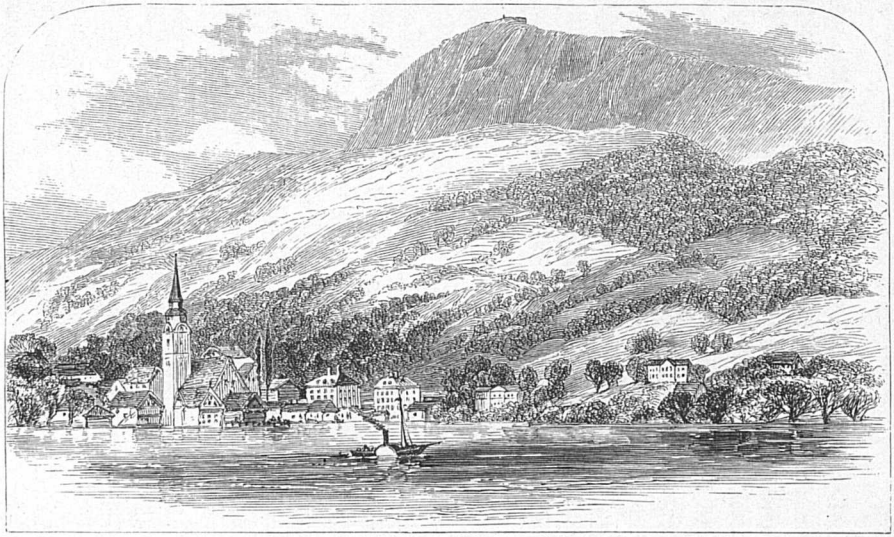
From this part of the road we had fine views of the Righi and Pilatus; the former showing its top cut off by a thin knife-like cloud.

Arrived at Lucerne we wandered about the

town, over its curious covered bridges, and by the far-famed lake, which is, indeed, considered the grandest in Europe. So many aspects does it present, and so irregular is its shape, that, when viewed from some of the neighbouring mountains, its arms appear distinct and independent; two of us had quite a warm little dispute when on the top of the Righi, as to whether a sheet of water we saw below us was part of the Lake of Lucerne or not.

We were much struck with the appearance of the town. It stands at the outflow of the River Reuss. Almost all the bridges (which are curious) are covered in, and the inner sides of one are ornamented with paintings out of the "Dance of Death." The longest, which crosses the mouth of the river diagonally, is a delightful place for a stroll on a hot day; not only do you get shade, but you see the cool, clear blue stream rushing beneath you, almost as swiftly as a mountain torrent.

This afternoon we provided ourselves with alpenstocks—the Swiss climbing-staves. Lucerne is one of the best places to buy them: they are strong, stout, and made of tough wood. In some parts of the country you can get only fir. These last are not to be trusted; I have had them snap quite inexcusably. They ought to bear a heavy strain; and the best test is to rest the two ends on



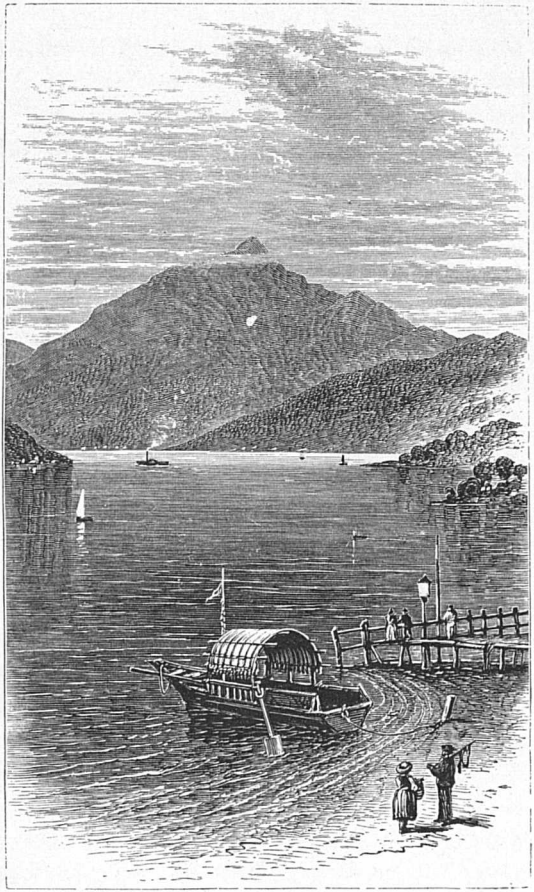
THE RIGHI AND KUSSNACHT

something, and then lean all your weight rather suddenly on the middle. If the stick bears that, you may lay the blame of your failures in climbing not on the wood, but on your legs. Even these, by the way, need not be brought with you any more than your stick, for you "find them" after two or three days' hard work. The alpenstock is most useful when you are going down hill. I can't explain the process,—that is, not so as to do you any good; for, after the best written and best studied advice as to the use of your staff, you will have to learn how to wield it afresh when you are on the mountain-side. You will find some mountaineers disposed to ridicule the ordinary tourist for his use of the alpenstock. Do not allow yourself to be thus put upon, or to carry a short walkingstick with an iron point. You may be going to "do" nothing but the common passes; never mind. Don't be laughed out of your alpenstock. One with an ice chisel or axe head would be affected unless you climbed much among glaciers, but the regular Swiss bâton is invaluable on the most frequented mountain routes; especially when you have a larger spike put in the end than is usually supplied. The miserable little toothpicks generally sold get stumped up or shoved in directly after, rendering the "bâton" sometimes almost useless. Don't buy an alpenstock with a chamois

horn at the upper end, or some day it will slip through your hand and hurt you.

The principal sight of Lucerne is the "monument to the memory of the Swiss Guards," who fell while defending the Royal family of France in the first revolution. It is carved out of the face of a rock, after a design of Thorwaldsen's, and represents a dying lion trying to protect a shield. Beneath are the names of the officers who fell there. Though without any great hunger for sights, especially monuments, I could not but feel that this was a grand national tribute on the part of the Swiss to the sense of duty. These Swiss soldiers were hired to defend the Tuileries, without probably much sentimental interest in the fortunes of its tenant. But they had made a bargain to fight, if needful, in its defence, and we all know how bravely they fulfilled their trust. It is the truest heroism to "do our best," however deserted and opposed.

The ascent of Mount Pilatus—so called from an old tradition that Pontius Pilate drowned himself in a lake near its summit—is made from Lucerne. It is a longer walk than up the Righi, but the view from the top, though very grand, is very frequently spoilt by clouds. So long do mists hang about it, though the weather be elsewhere fine, that superstition has referred them to the spiritual



MOUNT PILATE.

presence of Pilate, who was supposed to hide his ghost among them. Indeed, once there was a law in Lucerne, which, on this account, forbade the ascent of the mountain. The path up it has been much improved of the last few years, and there is a good inn on the top.

Having slept at Lucerne, we prepared to set off upon our walk. The luggage being directed "Thun," and sent off by "baggage post," we looked round for a guide. J. happened to fall in with one of the Laueners who had accompanied him some years before; so we took counsel with him, and knowing that we wanted a porter more than a guide, he came into our inn, and looking at the pack we wanted to be carried, said, "Ah! I know of a man for you. I will send him in." In he presently came—a hulking heavy-limbed fellow, in a suit of stained grey dittoes, with a narrow, evil face, marked with the smallpox, brown teeth, and bloodshot eyes. Jahn was his name; but we didn't call him by it. Directly he came into the room, I said, "Guide! this is an Ogre;" and Ogre he was called. Mind you, he could not speak or understand a word of English or French, and as neither J. nor I could talk German (the monster's supposed tongue), he used to make signs, swaying his arms about, and working his jaws. Well, we took him, or he took us, which you please; but as

for "guidance," the thing was absurd. With a map, a compass, and a tolerably good bump of locality, you can go over most ordinary ground by yourself—at least, without a guide. The Ogre did everything ill but howl, and certainly he was the best howler we heard in the land. Suddenly, within a yard—*à propos* to nothing at all—without any preparatory ahem! he would open his mouth and deliver a complicated yell, which might have been heard a league off. This we were pleased to call the Ranz des Vaches, or cow row. It was really a full grown "jodel," the common Alpine, I hardly know what word to use, but suppose we say "strain." Chaillu would have shot Jahn, and brought his skin home.

The Ogre howled throughout the day, at uncertain intervals; but in the evening, when he got along with other guides in the tap-room, over kirsch-water (the native spirit), his howl was paramount and continuous. You heard it at dinner; it went on while you sat outside and smoked your cigar afterwards, and when you had wound up your watch and got into bed (we always turned in early), often the last sound which accompanied the passage to sleep was a gust of the Ogre's howl.

We all said at the time that, in the common journal of our walk, the Ogre should have a

chapter to himself; but the sight and sound of him, not to particularize other senses whereby we always knew his presence, made so strong an impression, that the attempt to condense our observations into a single chapter had to be abandoned. The Ogre was the thread upon which all our earlier adventures were strung, and could not therefore be rolled up in a ball by himself.

Though we were singularly "served" in this instance, Swiss guides are, on the whole, a very respectable set of men. It was of no consequence to us; for we were not doing any thing dangerous or new, and the Ogre carried our traps as well as Apollo, or better. He was a great source of amusement, and albeit we were angry with him sometimes, he was a kindly monster at heart, and seemed to have many acquaintances.

I need hardly say, that in any dangerous or questionable expeditions, it is folly not to secure the services of good guides, most especially when you have much walking in the snow, and glacier work. I would not have gone over an ice-pass with the Ogre, for all the glory of the Alpine Club. Having hired him, and sent off heavier luggage to Thun, we went in light marching order on board the steamer, which left Lucerne at a quarter past one for Küssnacht, a village on the lake at the foot of the Righi.

This is the popular mountain in Switzerland. Every body ascends it, young and old, grave and gay, men, women, and children; some walk, some ride, some are carried up in chairs with poles under them, like Guy Fawkes. Altogether about twenty thousand get up it every year, one way or another. There are of course several routes to the summit; paths crawl and zigzag up from all sides —there are four, up which people generally ride, to say nothing of those suited only for walkers. There are the routes from Goldau, Küssnacht, Weggis, and Gersau: these, however, fall in with others, also principal bridle-paths. We walked; but there were two or three little caravans of horses and porters creeping up at the same time. You must not suppose that the Rhigi is quite as lively as an ant-hill, for all there are so many crawling tourists about it. It is some 4300 feet above the level of the lake; so we stepped out from our steamer on to the landing place at Küssnacht, with a good walk to begin with. Directly we set foot on shore, we were besieged by a host of porters and little boys—the latter precisely the same all the world over—eager to carry something. One tough brown young monkey stuck to us ever so long: he would carry a knapsack to the summit for three francs. "Tree!" says he, running on before us, so as to make the offer

very obvious. "Tree!" says he, holding up three fingers; however, we didn't want him, and set our faces against the hill-side and his proposal.

It was oppressively hot; the sun shone straight down upon the path in which we toiled, straight down upon our backs. The stones glowed like the floor of an oven, and the shimmer which rose from the scorched rock and soil made every outline waver and tremble, as if it were floating in the wind; but there was no wind, not breath enough to blow away the thistle seed which fell on the ground below the stalk. Here, thinks I, as, on putting my hand to my knapsack, I felt one of the buckles as hot as a young horseshoe fresh from the anvil, here is a pleasant beginning of a holiday—not to have walked up anything steeper than Holborn for twelve months, and now to labour like this, and all because I felt weak and ill! Suppose I had been condemned to it now. Suppose I had been compelled to trudge ever so many miles upstairs like this, with a pack on my back, what a piece of work I should have tried to make! Depend upon it, compulsion is the sting of slavery. Toil is less toilsome to the body when the heart is free. Loads are lighter when the spirit is light. This walk up the Righi is of course nothing under certain circumstances. I found by experience afterwards, and inquiry too,

that our trial of it was a very severe one. The sun plump on our backs, the dead hot calm everywhere, soon made us warm to our work. Still we pushed smartly on, thankful for an occasional patch of shade, however ragged.

More than halfway up our path there was a house, with shade and benches out of doors, cows standing by whisking their tails, and impatiently stamping at the flies; better still, there was a bustling landlord, with tall glasses of fresh milk and bright cool beer. So we sat down, and looked back on the Lakes of Zug and Lucerne, while we refreshed ourselves.

But we set off again, after a ten minutes' rest. The air grew fresher as we rose, and we found ourselves on the summit sooner than we expected. All the principal paths meet at a shoulder of the hill, about half an hour's walk from the Kulm, or true top. There is an inn at this focus of the road; but no one remains there unless that on the top be full. This, of course, is provoking to the host, who for years had nearly his own way. Latterly, however, an enterprising fellow bought a bit of land on the summit, and built a huge hotel there: but he had to pay enough for the privilege; one would have thought a patch on the top of a bare hill likely to be cheap; but it became the rage: every body wanted not only to see the

sun rise from the Righi, but to sleep there over night; so the canton made the landlord pay more than two thousand pounds for the site of his lonely inn.

Lonely, that is in situation; for it is generally, in summer, crammed to its eaves: deserted half the year, the other half it is more than filled. It seemed so as we entered; there was a crowd of all kinds—porters and guides, of course; young ladies who had ridden, tourists who had walked, fat and lazy people who had been carried; but we got bedrooms, and in a short time dinner too, which just then seemed more attractive than any view you could point out. Two long tables in a large *salle à manger* were quite full. The guests had all come up to see the sun rise, or, if not that, to see it set, which it did in the middle of dinner. A few enthusiastic people laid down their knives and forks to look out of the window, Most of them, however, preferred the positive tangible scene within doors, to the spectacle without, though it was superb; for we could see it where we sat. Great floods of changing colour welled up and struck against the clouds, as if the rainbow-laden sun, which had sailed and shone with a steady white light throughout the day, were now being wrecked, like a ship whose precious cargo floats out upon the sea.

III.—RIGHI KULM TO HOSPENTHAL.

A TOURIST writes:—"The sunrise at the Righi is the event of the day." Well, I suppose it is; at any rate, the day would look uncommonly foolish without it, at the Righi and elsewhere. However, our tourist is right. The presence of the sun at the Righi is thought less of than his approach; the twilight is preferred to the light. I believe there are people who have never seen the sun rise except from the Righi, who have no clear idea of what it is like anywhere else, who write enthusiastically in their journals about the rays which "herald his advent" there, as if the landlord who gave so large a price for the site of his inn had made some arrangements with them too, when he was about it. Would you believe it, my dear sluggard, that sunrise is beautiful in many places; that although there may be no snow-draped Jungfrau to blush as she wakes, there are often fleecy piles of clouds which redden in the east? Do you know that the "rays" shoot straight up amid them like silent rockets, only swifter, straighter, higher, till they strike against the skies? Do you know that there is a grand and glorious spectacle every summer morning going triumphantly on, while your lazy head is sunk in

the suffocating pillow? There is indeed, my dear sluggard, a battle between light and darkness—night and day—the two great giants who evermore chase each other over the wheeling globe, striding from peak to peak, skirting the mountain-tops, and shooting across the valleys in their endless contest. Well, we got up to see them wrestle on the top of the Righi. Day beat, night retired altogether from the field for a time. The scene was indeed a grand one. Resolved to defy disappointment, we had gone to bed, expecting the next morning to be cloudy. It very frequently is, on the Righi. We went to bed, I say, quite prepared to wake contentedly in fog. We had seen the sun set; we had had our walk, our dinner, we should have our sleep. There was a notice in each of our rooms, desiring gentlemen not to dress themselves in the blankets when they went out to see the sun rise, under pain of a fine of one or two francs.

Next morning I got up and walked out very early. The house was quite still. I expected to have heard the cow-horn, which is blown, according to Murray, on these occasions, but I went out silently into the grey morning; and only two or three others joined me.

Presently however I heard the row begin. I was, say, two hundred yards from the hotel, and

yet I could hear the hideous noise travelling about its inside, like a mad bull in a paddock, quite distinctly. No wonder people woke; in about five minutes they began to pour out at the door like bees from a hive you have tapped. They seemed to have made a point of not dressing. It is the correct thing to hurry out, unshaved, unwashed, with wraps huddled on; some had bed-feathers in their hair, at least fluff of some kind, and noses blue with clod; out they all streamed to see the sun rise; it was very ridiculous, and very sublime. The sun rolled up the night like a scroll. The mob of seedy-looking tourists saw it done in a very complimentary way, and then went back, some to dress, some to breakfast, and the rest to get into bed again.

The view from the Righi comprises a circle of three hundred miles in circumference. The Lakes of Lucerne and Zug lie immediately beneath you as you stand upon the Kulm. This Kulm, or summit, is a small bare space from which you can see the whole panorama by merely turning round. You have no need to shift your position; no, not so much as if you were looking at a painted one of Mr. Burford's in Leicester Square. You have only to turn round like a bottle-jack and see it all. Close beneath you, as I have said, lie the two large lakes, Lucerne and Zug, of a bright-blue

green; their shores are dotted and fringed with houses and villages. The town of Lucerne is visible in the distance. Eight other lakes may be counted, reckoning a little streak of Zurich.

But I need not go the round of the panorama like a showman. If you have been there you remember it. If not, you will take a guide-book and a map when you go. No description can give a detailed impression of so extensive a view.

The portion which interested us most, as prospective, was the Bernese Oberland, the white chain of snow-capped mountains, whose names are so familiar to all who have even a smattering of Switzerland: the Jungfrau, the Eiger, Finster Aarhorn, the Schreckhorn, the nearer Titlis, beside others, peak after peak, showing cold and clear between the nearer hills and the blue bright sky beyond.

The day was as fine as the morning. It was Sunday; we had service twice in the inn, and sat the remainder of the day upon the short green grass which grew upon the Kulm. Now let me say, once for all, that tourists never make a greater mistake than when they travel on Sunday. It is true that we were walking for the purpose of recreation; the truest refreshment in a sedentary life is exercise. One of our party remarked, while we were toiling up the Righi, that we laboured to

enter into rest; so full is the wisdom of the Bible, so applicable to the life of every passing day, as well as to that which is to come; but even work for health must have its pauses. I am not going here to enter into other rersons why we should rest on Sunday, when it is possible; but I wish to deliver myself of a belief that for tourists to travel on the day of rest is a great mistake—it is stupid. They miss the accumulated zest with which the route is resumed on Monday. They grow feverish, irritable, and jaded: they turn their gain into a loss, and really make a toil out of pleasure. Well, we rested on the Righi, reposing, except during the hours at which we held our little service, upon the short green grass which grows upon the Kulm. It was the loveliest day I ever saw. There was a gentle breeze, which went down upon the lakes and brushed them into patches of small waves, thus varying their deep blue green with streaks of darker shade.

The sound of the church bells at Küssnacht came up as distinctly as if they were close at hand, though, on looking down upon the village, the keenest eye would have searched in vain for a human figure. It was too far off to show more than the houses and tower of the church; two or three boats upon the water were barely visible, and the steamer looked like a midge crawling on

a large sheet of blue paper, so slowly did it seem to move.

We were above the clouds. There were not many; but every now and then they sailed steadily beneath us—clean edged, solid-looking, like great bales of white cotton, such as Jupiter lolled upon, with nectar and thunderbolts at his elbow; none of your equivocal, undefined apologies of mists, but compact *bonâ fide* clouds, which seemed firm enough to be stepped upon. Sometimes they brushed the top of the mountain and broke, leaving stray fragments sticking about for a few minutes, and enveloping us during their passage in the deepest fog, which obscured the sun and everything it shone on in a moment. Then the mass rolled by, and slipped away over its shadow across the lakes and land.

I could not help thinking this view of the clouds from above a parable of what we often begin to feel when we have reached mid-life. We pass many things which before seemed far above us—sometimes quite in cloud-land. The prospect, for instance, of a profession, and marriage, often seems to the youth almost more than distant; they belong to a higher flight of existence; but as we climb on, even these are gained, and we see the world, and the things of the world, from loftier heights. Or suppose we think the clouds

emblematical of sorrows, trials—there is a path above them. Shall we thus look back upon the thickest cloud of all—on death? There is sunshine beyond that, if we only can mount high enough, by God's grace. Only be sure of this, and then the steepest hill need not make us despair. But if our walk be ever on the lazy lower flats of earth—if we crawl about, content to rise no higher than we find ourselves to be, then, though a streak of sunshine may sometimes reach us, we shall never pass the clould—never be sure, as we might be, of the boundless light of God.

Forgive this sermon on the Righi; but the text was so grand and solemn that——you will say, I had better have left it alone. Well, I have done now.

In the evening we saw the place under another aspect. A thick fog came on, rolling down on everything, dripping, cheerless, cold. We were glad to wrap ourselves up warm when we went to bed.

Next morning the mist was as thick as ever—indeed, it should rather have been called rain, for it was so wet that several fresh comers looked as if they were soaked to their bones. Such an atmosphere, familiar to our Scotch friends, makes an umbrella of little or no use. The inside of it gets as wet as the outside. The rain seems to rise as well as fall.

Having stopped now for some time on the Righi, we did not like to spend any more upon it, and so we started off in defiance of the weather. But we had not gone very far before we found that the fog was confined to the top of the mountain, and that a very respectable fine day, though cloudy, was going on beneath. We walked down out of the wet towards Weggis. This path is rather more direct than that by which we had ascended. The Ogre was in high spirits at going down-hill, and stalked on before us triumphantly.

Arrived at Weggis, we sat down in a little arbour belonging to the inn, overlooking the lake, and refreshed ourselves with bread and wine. There was some time to wait before the arrival of the steamer, so two of our party went in search of the post-office, which we found upstairs in a cottage—the postmaster stamping our letters in the midst of his family circle. Having still time to spare, one of our party inquired for a barber, as he wanted to be shaved. This was at the inn. Presently he came, took him into a large room, which would have held a hundred people, and, setting him in the midst, tucked a bib under his chin. Having lathered him silently, he took up his razor, and laid hold of his nose with such an air of anxiety and indecision, that the patient almost gave the feature up for lost—especially as

we insisted on being present, and made the artist nervous. However, he got through it at last, shaving one side two days' march in, and skipping about a quarter of a facial acre on the other.

By this time the steamer came, and we started for Flüelen, a village at the foot of the St. Gothard's Pass, near the summit of which we intended to sleep that night.

We passed close by William Tell's chapel on our way, which, however famous in history, looked, in fact, very much like a toy out of a German bazaar. The borders of the Lake of Lucerne are not only grand by nature—the rocks sometimes rising for many hundred feet sheer out of water—but they are ever memorable from having been the scene of William Tell's heroic deeds, and the birth-place of Swiss liberty; indeed, they are sometimes called Tell's country.

The carriage-road over the St. Gothard begins at Flüelen. Here, having hired the Ogre to carry our traps, we were obliged to hire a vehicle to carry him. We took the opportunity of securing seats ourselves, and drove to Amsteg. While the horses fed, we did too. The principal fare of the country is bread, cheese, and honey; we found abundance of this last everywhere; indeed, Switzerland is quite the hive as well as the dairy of Europe. We were amused here with the free

and easy manners of some of the people. Our waiting-maid, having served us, took down a guitar from a nail in the wall, and sang as we ate our luncheon. Perhaps she was vain of her skill, such as it was, on this un-Swiss-like instrument; a hurdy-gurdy would have been more appropriate. Having bidden adieu to the musical waitress, and paid our bill, we drove slowly up the St. Gothard's Pass; at least our driver did, for we walked. As we are doing that, the Ogre smoking a friendly pipe with the coachman, lets us have a little chat about the road we are ascending, It may, indeed, be taken as the sample of all the great carriage passes, for, with their peculiarities of scenery, they all have this in common—a turnpike-road above the clouds. It is this which strikes the traveller. From the upper parts of all passes, whether made by foot or not, you get extensive views, but on these you have them from a carriage-window. You can have your wraps, your air-cushion, your hot-water bottle, your smelling salts, your novel, or your knitting, and drive safely from harvest to snow, and down to harvest again, without the steps of your carriage being let down. It is this ease in places which were once dreaded for the perils of their passage, and which now show within gunshot spots inaccessible to the cragsman and the chamois, which

characterizes the great mountain carriage-roads between Switzerland or France and Italy. The pass of St. Gothard is one of the oldest and most frequented of all those across the Alps, though it has been made what it is within the last thirty years. Originally, like many other present passes, it was only a bridle-path, creeping up here and there as nature favoured the ascent; now skirting the shoulder of a mountain, now pushing its way in between two rocks, and making some advance up a watercourse, now climbing a slope diagonally in steps as steep as stairs, and twice as rough. At the present time it is a magnificent macadamised road, as good as Piccadilly, and as safe. Of course such a road, in such a place, could not be made without enormous expense; bridges had to be built, rocks blasted, sometimes so steep that workmen had to be let down from the top by ropes before they could bore the holes for the blasting-powder—channels to be cut here and there and covered in, that falling avalanches might slip harmlessly over the traveller's head. The poor canton of Uri was hard put to it to scrape together its share of the expense of this immense undertaking; and when it was all done, when the parapets were finished, and the road was opened, a storm burst upon the mountains, such as no living man had seen, and in a few hours swept one-third

of it away. Twelve years had been spent in constructing the road; but the poor inhabitants, like ants, soon repaired the mischief which was done, and now it is so safe that horses trot down the whole distance without danger. The road itself rises about twice the height of Snowdon—a great descent to make at a swinging trot, with no more provision than a good drag and a careful driver.

St. Gothard's Pass had been the scene of strange changes. Through it many of the barbarian hordes poured down upon the plains of Italy, when Rome declined; later than that, it is said that not less than 16,000 peaceful travellers and 9000 horses crossed it in a single year; and that was before it was made practicable for carriages.

On this road, in its old rugged state, French, Austrian, and Russian armies fought in 1799, scrambling, tumbling from cleft to cleft, and rock to rock.

One of the most terrible contests in that campaign was the struggle on the Devil's Bridge—not the solid structure of masonry across which cannon and cavalry might march as easily as over the Thames, but a steep narrow arch, which spans the torrent a short distance lower down. It looks like a sham bridge; so slight, narrow, and steep, it seems almost to shake above the river which thunders beneath, with scarcely a parapet, and

barely width for two persons to pass; and here Austrians and French met, slashed, wrestled, till the former were driven across, the yells of the combatants being hardly heard above the roar of the torrent, which boiled white at a depth of seventy feet beneath them, and whirled off the dead and wounded who dropped into it, like leaves. So says the guide-book; but the bridge—for I scrambled down to it—is actually four unbrellas wide, nearly twelve feet, and quite firm.

The road ascends the mountains in a series of zigzags, and skirts the River Reuss on one side or the other. It is, however, more like a cataract, or at least, a series of rapids, than a river, as it leaps from rock to rock. There are, they say, some trout in it higher up, where it flows for a short distance more quietly; but I should think, if they ever attempted to explore the extent of their native stream, they must be all pounded to death among the rocks. Nothing in the shape of a fish unless it were, say an oyster in strong health, could live unbruised in such an hubble-bubble. The trout you get at the inns at Andermatt and Hospenthal come from a neighbouring lake,

In some places the road is skirted by huge cliffs of granite, which rise like the walls of a house and almost turn sunshine into twilight.

We walked nearly all the way to the Devil's

Bridge; for the road, though good, is of course a tedious one for horses to ascend, giving them a dead unbroken pull against the collar for hours. When they have anything heavier than an empty carriage to drag, the effect is sometimes distressing to see. The turns of the zigzags especially try the team. The waggons used for merchandise here, are large and roomy. They seem to prove themselves more convenient than smaller vehicles with subdivision of horse power.

On a former occasion I drove over the Mont Cenis, another Alpine pass, in a heavily laden diligence. We had then twelve mules, and the drivers walked alongside to keep them up to the work. Did you ever notice the "burst" with which a loaded waggon is sometimes taken up a sharp slope into a field? The horses struggle, and pull from their toes. I don't know how to express the action better; just so, hour after hour, with occasional pauses to get our wind, we struggled up the Mont Cenis, each of our dozen beasts making as much noise as if he had had twelve legs: the drivers shouting alongside, and adding to the clatter by the incessant cracking of their whips. We had left Turin that day, and it felt as if we were trying to pull the town over the Alps, and doing it too, slowly.

However, this afternoon we are ascending the

St. Gothard with no more noise—no trifle that either—than the roar of the Reuss at our side. Our carriage is far behind; indeed, I strongly suspect the Ogre is inside, probably asleep, with his mouth open.

After having halted for some time on the Devil's Bridge, we got into our vehicle again, and entered a pastoral valley, which contrasted strongly with the wild scenery we had just quitted. Having passed Andermatt, we made a bend to the right, and reached Hospenthal, which is about two miles beyond. Above Andermatt may be seen the remains of a Ban forest. These protect villages at the bottom of long slopes from the snow and rubbish which rolls or slides down the sides of the mountains. When places have been deprived of this natural protection they have been seriously damaged, sometimes destroyed. It is illegal to cut down trees in a Ban forest.

We now left the main road which leads over the summit of the pass into Italy, and turned into the track which conducts the tourist towards the most frequented route in the Oberland, Beyond Hospenthal the carriage-road towards the Furca ceases; indeed, we already saw a great change from the well kept highway of St. Gothard. It was dark when we got to the inn, which was to be our starting-place for the morrow's walk.

After a supper of magnificent trout, we were glad to go to bed. We even there felt, in the cold, the great height to which we had ascended. I piled every likely and flexible thing I could lay hold of upon my coverlet, in trying to get warm, and fell fast asleep at last before I had well succeeded.

Before starting for the Grimsel let me say a word about the remainder of this St. Gothard road. Excepting the Devil's Bridge the most remarkable part of the pass is on the other or Italian side. I have crossed it twice. The route lies below you in a coil of road by which you are let down, as it were, to Airolo, which you see long before you reach it. It looks dangerous to see the great diligence swinging round the sharp and frequent turns at full trot, but accidents seldom happen except at night, or from the falling of stones during very wet weather. We were once nearly coming to grief here though, from the carelessness of the driver of our carriage. A stray, or rather spare horse, which had been helping to drag some load up-hill was standing in the middle of the road with his tail towards us. Our driver trusting to dislodge him charged right upon his stern with the pole of our carriage. I never saw such a kick as he gave. No wonder, but he nearly made our horses, who were no

willing party to this insult, fling us over the parapet in starting aside from his hoofs.

But to return to the Regular Swiss Round.

IV.—HOSPENTHAL TO THE GRIMSEL.

ON leaving Hospenthal, the next morning, we got up before sunrise, which furnished us with some opportunities for a little self-deception. P. and I had lamed ourselves coming down the Righi. In descending a steep path for two or three hours, the foot is constantly pushed forward in the shoe, and the upper part, where the skin is tender, is very likely to be flayed. It was so with us; and therefore, the next morning we were not sorry to limp along very slowly, under pretence of stopping to admire the sunrise. Let me remark here, in reference to shoes, that it is a good thing to have the upper leather soft; let the soles be hard and thick, but the rest of the shoe should be flexible and soft. Of course, walking-boots used on such excursions as these must fit very easily, for the foot often swells so much at first, that it is difficult to put a close-fitting boot on, and intolerable pain to wear it when you have done so. Sometimes, moreover,—as when you expect to walk long in snow,—it is necessary to wrap the toes in

fur, to keep them from being frost-bitten; and then, what will you do if you have been so silly as to try to walk in a fashionable pair of boots? If you are determined to be very natty about your feet, why, stay at home, and exhibit them to an admiring public—say at Margate; don't attempt any walking, least of all, in Switzerland.

We soon worked off our lameness, P. and I, however, comparing notes every now and then. J. capered off like Pan; but I strongly suspect he suffered great torture, though he made a good pretence of being intact. We enjoyed the consolations of sympathy.

The summit of the Furca Pass was to be our first resting-place. This is some eight thousand and odd feet high; but we had already gained a considerable height. There is a little inn at the top of the pass, and when we were there a patch of snow lay by it—the last part of the ascent being a sharp pull. We saw the inn at last. Our route hitherto was not very striking, the finest scenery being on the other side of the Furca. This, no doubt, made our walk appear longer. At last, however, we got to the little inn, and had a grand view of the Finster Aarhorn, from a spot a short distance from it. Though a fine day in August, and about noon, it was bitterly cold; indeed, the snow lay a few yards

off. After luncheon we sat a while outside the inn, in the most sheltered spot we could find, and enjoyed the grand view before us, looking onward in the direction of our route. Here I first noticed the singularly constructed nose of the mountain dogs. It is almost split in the middle. I can resemble it to nothing better than the muzzle of a double gun, with a deep depression between the barrels. One of these brutes, sitting before me and begging steadily for scraps, looked exactly as if he were taking aim.

After lunch we started under salute of howls from the Ogre, our way lying towards the Glacier du Rhône. We passed immense numbers of the red mountain rhododendrons—the Alpine roses, as they are sometimes called. The bloom of flowers, however, is shortlived in the mountains, and these had blossomed for the year. Nothing can be more beautiful than they are when out; covering, as they do, large tracts of country, you seem to walk in a world of roses, except where the bare rock rises up from among them. Flowers are a great feature of Swiss scenery; some of the pastures we passed looked more like gardens than fields, so bright were they with blossom. But the Swiss summer is very shortlived—magnificent while it lasts, but soon gone. We looked in vain for a perfect flower among all the miles of rhododen-

drons through which we passed, but could not find one, though a few weeks before this they had seemed to set the hills on fire.

Our path descended towards the Glacier du Rhône, which soon came in sight. It is the first you see near, by this route; you can throw pebbles on its surface, so closely does it skirt the regular route for a considerable distance. This glacier is a famous and large one. It looks like a river, wider than the Thames at Greenwich, tossed into pointed waves, poured over a ridge of granite, spreading out below like a fan, frozen in the act, and then powdered with soiled snow. This destroys much of the effect; you look in vain for much of the deep bright blue of the ice; we saw plenty of it afterwards elsewhere: but here the nearest ice looked not only white, but a very dingy white—its border especially being covered with stones and dirt, like the edge of the Serpentine when little boys pitch things upon it before it will bear. No doubt it was immensely thick, and here and there we could see blue in the cracks, even close by. In the distance, the blue was much more distinct; but I desire to convey honestly the impression made on most people by this famous glacier. It is fringed with dirty snow. As the glacier comes down from the heights in which it is formed, it grinds the rocks, which drop stones and

dirt upon it; these it carries upon its surface for a long time—often to the last, when it melts into a stream. While we are here, let me say, once for all, a word about these glaciers.

They come down from the immense accumulation of old snow among the higher mountains, oozing out, as it were, and carried slowly downwards by their own weight, till they reach the valleys, where they are melted by the heat of the sun, and issue in streams. It has been calculated that there are about six hundred glaciers in the Swiss Alps, and that the extent of surface occupied by them is about one thousand square miles. They are of all sizes—in some places six hundred and seven hundred feet thick; but their average depth has been taken to be between sixty and one hundred feet. They consist of ductile ice, which, although it opens out into fissures, holds together, and bends over rough ground and even steep rocks in its descent, never losing its connection with its parent store among the hills. Sometimes there are several of these slow ice eruptions, in different directions, from the same great central reservoir among the mountains. That around the Finster Aarhorn sends out no less than thirteen branches; its extent has been estimated at one hundred and twenty-five square miles, and it is supposed to be the largest in Europe.

As the glacier advances, it destroys all vegetation, scraping the rocks bare, and turning over large firs as if they were mere stubble. Indeed it is not unlike a huge ploughshare, and penetrates deep down into many valleys far below the pasture and trees. It edge is generally covered with the *dèbris* of rocks which it has crushed and grazed in squeezing itself between peaks and down narrow gorges. Though wasted at its lower end, it is continually supplied from above; thus, sometimes the accumulations of stones at its foot is immense. I have seen it far more than a hundred feet high. These loads of stones and rubbish which the glacier carries are called moraines, and prove the previous existence of glaciers in places from which they have long disappeared. Sometimes great boulders are found of a quite different kind of stone from that on which they rest. They have been carried there by glaciers, which at last melted under them and left them where they lie. The surface of rocks, too, is sometimes scraped and grooved. This is caused by the motion of an ancient glacier which scratched and rubbed them in its descent.

The great danger in traversing a glacier arises from its cracks or crevasses. As the huge mass pushes itself over rough ground, or even the edge of a rock fissures open on its surface, to allow it

to bend; sometimes the whole glacier is thus broken up into great irregular blocks and wedges, at others it is crossed by cracks. These are very troublesome to the traveller; for, though they do not extend across the whole width of the glacier, they often compel him to follow them to their narrow end, where alone they can be passed. A number of these makes the ascent of some glaciers very tedious work.

The Glacier du Rhône, which we are skirting, is easily traversed at its lower, broad extremity. having reached comparatively level ground, and being little crevassed. As I have said, it is of a dirty white, like soiled snow, but of immense extent.

The Rhône issues from it in a milk-white stream. How unlike the deep green river which bursts away out of the Lake of Geneva, and flows so swiftly through sunny France! I once descended it to Avignon, where the heat in October was Italian; now I saw it leap from its parent ice.

Before leaving glaciers for the present, I must be here permitted to follow the example of the regular guide-book, and transcribe the beautiful illustration they suggested to Professor James D. Forbes:—

"Poets and philosophers have delighted to compare the course of human life to that of a river;

perhaps a still apter simile might be found in the history of a glacier. Heaven-descended in its origin, it yet takes its mould and conformation from the hidden womb of the mountains which brought it forth. At first, soft and ductile, it acquires a character and firmness of its own, as an inevitable destiny urges it on its onward career. Jostled, and constrained by the crosses and inequalities of its prescribed path, hedged in by impassable barriers, which fix limits to its movements, it yields, groaning, to its fate, and still travels forward seamed with the scars of many a conflict with opposing obstacles. All this while, although wasting, it is renewed by an unseen power: it evaporates but is not consumed. On its surface it bears the spoils which, during the progress of existence, it has made its own—often weighty burdens, devoid of beauty or value, at times precious masses, sparkling with gems or with ore. Having at length attained its greatest width and extension, commanding admiration by its beauty and power, waste predominates over supply, the vital springs begin to fail, it stoops into an attitude of decrepitude. It drops the burdens, one by one, which it had borne so proudly aloft: its dissolution is inevitable. But as it is resolved into its elements, it takes all at once a new, and livelier, and disembarrassed form; from

the wreck of its members it arises another, yet the same—a noble, full-bodied, arrowy stream, which leaps rejoicing over the obstacles which before had stayed its progress, and hastens through fertile valleys, towards a freer existence, and a final union in the ocean, with the boundless and the infinite."

We crossed the infant Rhone by a pine bridge, and reached a little inn at the bottom of the valley. Into this the Ogre immediately plunged, pushing greedily forward as we approached it, and taking off his knapsack as he entered the door. There he vanished without any apology or explanation, and there we left him; for we did not sit down ourselves, but, taking a draught of milk, pushed on to the Grimsel. It was a stiff walk to the top of the pass, the path lying among great stones and fragments of rock, which sometimes made the ascent like a steep broken staircase. As we rose, however, we began to catch the breeze, unfelt in the valley, and had grand views behind us of the glacier, and the path we had descended from the Furca.

The sudden changes from declivity to hill are rather trying at first to untrained legs. Fresh sets of muscles are brought into play, and the first two or three days make the shins and thighs ache, as if they had been beaten. They soon harden,

however, and adapt themselves to their unaccustomed exertion; so much so, that, after a week's good walking, you feel ready to face anything, and stride quickly down rough paths, and among blocks of stone, which shortly before would have required a slow, and perhaps shaky descent. When we got to the top of the pass, we came upon a lake called the Dead Sea, from the corpses of slain Austrians having been thrown into it. It is a sombre leaden-looking piece of water, deep and cold. Leaving this on our left, we begin to descend a series of stone zigzags, at the bottom of which, some three-quarters of an hour off, was the inn at which we proposed to lie for that night. This, too, stood at the edge of a small lake, which, shut in by high rocks, looked deeper than it was broad.

The Grimsel inn is a great centre of passes in these parts. The most famous of these is the Strahleck, leading to Grimdelwald. It is described by Murray as "very difficult, indeed, suited only to skilful mountaineers;" but it is generally not so bad as it is described to be. Many fair walkers cross it in some favourable states of the snow. It may be accomplished in fourteen or fifteen hours, and is one of the most striking in the Alps. The route (there is no path) leads under the Shreckhorn, and descends to Grimdelwald by the lower

glacier. There is another pass to Gadmenthal, which has not yet received a name, being seldom traversed, though very beautiful. There is also the Oberaarjoch, a tiresome snow pass, to Viesch, and another to Meyringen over the Lauteraar and Gauli glaciers.

Hence we are now in one of the most central spots in the Oberland. Besides these more formidable and established excursions, there are a number of magnificent walks in the neighbourhood of the inn, which would make it a very pleasant place for a sojourn of a few days. Being the terminus to so many passes, it often gets quite full as the day draws on. When we arrived, we found several people there already, but many more kept coming in till the place was more than filled. We never met with so crowded a hostelry. The inn, which is deserted in the winter, is nothing but a large unpainted stone box, with a number of smaller deal ones inside it. Every room was occupied, and there was quite a little mob of guides and porters about the door, You may be sure the Ogre led a powerful chorus of howlers in the evening.

We thought, however, that we had lost him, for some time. A rough bench outside the inn commanded a view of the zigzags leading down from the top of the pass. We sat there, drinking some

delicious milk, and could see every successive party winding slowly down. As each reached the little level spot on which the inn stood, we looked for the Ogre among them. But no. Porters and guides came in, casting their loads gladly down, and wiping their tanned brows; but the Ogre was not in sight. We searched with glasses among the distant figures descending the path, for the awkward gait and clumsy figure of our guide, but it was not till the last party had drawn near, that we saw him lumbering along half a mile beyond the lag end of the hindmost batch. He came in for a good deal of "chaff" among the other guides, for being an hour and a half behind his party; but he soon howled it all off.

The view at the Grimsel is very striking, not only from the wildness of the rocks around it, but from the many colours of the lichens which clothe them.

We mustered a large party in the evening, of many nations, and, considering the loneliness of the spot, fared exceedingly well. It need be a good larder to feed half a hundred hungry tourists, to say nothing of the large party of guides and porters, who played at least as good knives and forks as their masters. We had plenty of mutton, stewed prunes, and nuts. I never saw so many nutcrackers together; each person was supplied.

A man walked down the room with a large basketful, dealing them out right and left. There must have been fifty, Everybody had a knife, a fork, and a large pair of iron nutcrackers.

V.—THE GRIMSEL TO ROSENLAUI.

THE next morning I walked out very early and saw the goats milked. They did not seem to like it much themselves; for it required a good deal of persuasion and some blows to keep them together until the operation was over. I have noticed with other animals that moral force is strongest when there is some contingent physical force behind it. The temper of the policeman is unruffled. He almost smiles when he says. "Come, now, muv on." He is unarmed. Behold the majesty of the law! But he has a truncheon in his pocket. A statesman argues—as if the world were ruled by reason—and writes the politest of diplomatic notes; but there is an army and a fleet behind him. To return to the goats; they didn't like it; they didnt want to be milked, and capered off all manner of ways. Sometimes they are forward enough, to be sure; now they are froward. However, a few lads surrounded them, and, narrowing the circle, drove the beasts with little

stones and bits of wood on to a comparatively level spot, hard by the inn. Here the milkmen waited with pails in their hands and milking-stools tied on them all ready, so that the man lost no time in settling himself and setting to work directly he had caught his goat. The effect of this arrangement was very droll, when, as each animal was milked and dismissed, the operator ran after another, like a great ape with a stumpy tail, the milking stool strapped round his loins having only one leg.

After breakfast the large party of tourists melted away. We had met for an evening and cracked nuts together, and now we were bound for north, south, east, and west.

Our route lay to Rosenlaui—a pretty name, which gave me an additional interest in the place —by Handek and Gutannen, leaving Meyringen on our right. Part of our walk was a gentle descent through hay fields and grass meadows bright with blossom, though at first we passed through stony valleys remarkable for their wildness and beauty. We had picked up now a fourth pleasant companion, Captain W., who walked with us for three days. These travelling acquaintance ships are often very agreeable. A solitary tourist may be almost sure of falling in with somebody going his way for a while. We, of course, being

a party, were quite independent, though we gave company to two or three different solitaries in the course of our round. It is not, however, during the daytime that much conversation can go on—at least, not on the march; when toiling up-hill, you have not much breath to spare for words, and when you are going down, you sometimes have to look too closely after your footsteps to think of "beguiling the way with friendly chat." Indeed, we generally walked in single file, and often at more than chatting distances. But when the midday halt comes, and the chalet is reached—when the top of a pass or hill is gained—the party meets in cheering spirits. So, too, in the evening; a lone man looks wretched coming into an inn with no one to discuss the day's work with him, or plan to-morrow's.

P. and I were in less humour than usual for talking to-day; for, having come upon some bowls of milk outside a chalet, we drank a good deal before we found that it was sour; hence we made vows and faces for the next fifteen miles. Generally the Swiss milk is delicious, and when set, as it sometimes is, by the peasants outside their chalets, with heaps of alpine strawberries close by the path up a pass, it is almost impossible to get by without taking some. You help yourself, and the cowherd makes a little charge. I have

heard it said that a small stone kept in the mouth while walking will prevent thirst. It is very true; you are compelled to keep your mouth shut, and therefore your tongue does not become dry, Probably there is something more than a professional bias in the form given to this advice by the old soldier. He says, "Put a bullet in your mouth," This, which is heavy, and used to be round, would fall out more readily than anything else the moment you opened your mouth. Unless it is shut, the additional panting during the climb, the rapid inhaling of *very dry air* through the mouth, makes the tongue hard like a parrot's, and then the thirst is intense, Every now and then the guide tells you which are safe springs to drink at, and, *provided you continue walking*, you may take a good draught at the cool wayside spout out of rock, without any harm. Mischief is done when you allow perspiration to be checked at the same time. But the pebble in the mouth is very useful. I need hardly say that spirits are most injurious when you are taking violent exercise. They help to parch what is already too dried up. Many persons have felt more relief from cold tea than from any thing else. It should be made as strong as possible, and then it can be diluted when used. There is a refreshing roughness about this restorative which invigorates the tired machinery of

the mouth, while it quenches thirst with as little consumption of liquid as possible. Some of the light country beer is excellent; at any rate, take care not to drink sour milk, as P. and I did, or you won't forget it in a hurry. I met a man who had been rash and thirsty like ourselves, and who declared that once the milk turned into curds inside him, and that after drinking, say a quart of fluid, he presently found himself the proprietor of a large lump of inaccessible cheese somewhere beneath the lower buttons of his waistcoat. But there was no help for it, so he walked about with his knapsack behind him and his cheese before him, feeding on nothing but bread and beer till the cheese was used up. Mind, I am not responsible for the account of the final issue of this accident. When I met the sufferer his cheese was all gone.

The approach to Rosenlaui was very beautiful. The latter part of our way led through a gorge, in which, as in a frame, was set the Wetterhorn, one of the grandest of Oberland peaks. We looked up out of the dark green of a pine forest; above this rose almost perpendicular granite rocks, glowing red in the sunset, and thus framed, far beyond but brought close in that clear air, the peaks of snow. There was a great bird circling up above our heads. We voted it an eagle. The inn at

Rosenlaui was what the guide-books call in a "very romantic" situation, and presented the beau ideal of a Swiss cottage. (It is now burnt.) A man came in while we were at dinner, to sell little carved wooden articles, which are much made here. There are, or were, two rather famous carvers, brothers, as like as two policeman, one at Rosenlaui, the other at the Wengern Alp. J. bought, and presented to me there and then, a nutcracker in the shape of a crocodile, which he intended as a material sarcasm on an appetite which he had lost, having rather over-walked himself, and could not see others enjoy without the most malignant envy. The crocodile grins upon my mantelshelf at this very moment, in silent appreciation of my sentiments. The favourite productions of these carvers are chamois with their heads turned back. This is supposed to give the characteristic attitude of the animal; at any rate it economizes wood and enables the result to be easily packed in a square box.

I forgot to mention that we stopped on our way from the Grimsel to see the falls of the Aar, at Handek. This is considered the finest cataract in Switzerland. The river, which flows in a gorge between the mountains, leaps abruptly over a precipice more than two hundred feet high, and seems to lose itself in a huge cleft, the rock rising steep

up above the spot into which it plunges. Another stream, the Handek, or Erlenbach, pours itself into the same chasm as the Aar, the two streams mingling below—indeed, during their descent. A curious effect is sometimes produced by one river being white, and the other brown. The wag of our party compared it to *café au lait* on a large scale; for in making that beverage the milk and coffee are generally poured out together. This, of course, was very irreverent, however apt. The scene is really grand. You descend to the falls by a path from the little inn, reaching them in a few minutes. A light wooden bridge has been thrown over the Aar, just where it takes the plunge, not more than five or six feet above the surface of the water. The din is great; for the stream, which is full and large, pitches with all its force right upon the rocks beneath, leaping clean off the precipice from which it descends.

While we were looking down the cataract, and listening to some stories about wonderful leaps and other foolish things which had been done there, a brisk little travelling photographer appeared on the edge of the rock immediately opposite to us, and began making arrangements to take a view of the falls; so we "posed" ourselves immediately, being of necessity included in the picture, and I doubt not have been on sale in Oxford Street ever since.

To return to Rosenlaui. After breakfast the next morning, we visited the famous glacier of the place. This is one of the most accessible in Switzerland, descending civilly to within a short distance of the inn, among the fir-trees. It shows also much more colour than that of the Rhone, having its lower extremity beautifully scooped out, so that you can walk into ice caverns and look up into the peculiar ultramarine of the glacier ice. We noticed how strongly the rock had been scraped by its descent.

J. and Captain W. had gone on a little before us, the Ogre showing P. and me the way to the glacier. I was rather surprised at the Ogre not having his knapsack on. Mine I had transferred to a stout lad whom I had engaged for two or three days. Naturally, I did not like to have my temporary servant put upon, and therefore, when we reached our party in advance, I was horribly angry at finding that the Ogre had put his bundle on the top of mine, and that therefore my man Friday was groaning under a double load. The Ogre, who was more than twice his size, grinned at us both in triumph, stubbornly refusing to touch his pack, and being quite unable to apologize or explain.

He howled triumphantly throughout the day. Our path lay over the greater Sheideck Pass, the

Wetterhorn being the chief feature of the walk. The top of this magnificent mountain was never reached till 1855, being nothing but a cap of solid ice, which it is necessary to cut into with axes in order to gain a footing. Ulrich Lauener and Mr. A. Wills were the first to effect an ascent; really, though, with all respect, I think the climbing of such a ticklish cone hardly worth the risk, at least to those who had already gained a great character as mountaineers. But of coúrse the cragsman is subject to the great law of enterprise; the more he has done the more he wants to do. The walk from Rosenlaui to the top of the pass was very beautiful. Though steepish in parts, the road is easy enough for men and mules. We met several parties of tourists, one led by a lady in bloomer. She skipped over the stones with evident pleasure at defying the difficulties of her sex. Ladies cannot well walk far with comfort in the mountains, if they wear their proper dress, but the ponies and mules may generally be trusted, and will go over almost any rough obstacle in their way with safety when ascending. It is in coming down-hill that accidents on horseback mostly happen in the mountains. We were glad to lunch at the inn on the Sheideck: almost all the passes have some house of entertainment, however humble, at their summit. This is often made a starting-place

for the ascent of the Faulhorn, a mountain on our right, from which a very grand view is obtained of the Bernese Chain. The sunrise there is also much esteemed, but the panorama is not so great as that from the Righi.

In the course of our walk, we passed several very irritable echoes. These were provoked by men with huge cow-horns, from five to six feet long. They waited, with their instruments set in rough rests or crutches, at convenient spots, and, when travellers came in sight, began to blow, holding out their hats for a fee as we passed. The few notes of this simple instrument are taken up and repeated so many times, but at such a distance, that the report of a single blast seems quite to have died away, before you hear a chorus of cow-horns begin, a mile off. We stopped and treated ourselves to several pennyworth's of cow-row. I should imagine, though, that this unprofessional use of the horn, which is used to call the cattle home, must cause great confusion in the minds of the cows. I fear they are often at a loss to distinguish the summons of their own master—the genuine voice of truth—from the selfish trumpetings of the gentlemen who, like many elsewhere and with more pretensions, get their living simply by making a noise in the world.

I paused to make particular mention of the falls

of the Aar; but do not suppose that waterfalls are few in Switzerland. They abound, especially, I think, in the Bernese Oberland. You pass many, which would justify sonnets and excursion trains in a dry country, almost without notice, so numerous do they become. They are frequently very beautiful, winding down the dark granite slopes of the mountain like skeins of white silk, then losing themselves for a while in mist as they spring over the edge of a precipice, but at last reappearing as they join the larger streams in the lower parts of the valleys. These larger streams are generally a continuous rapid, whirling, boiling along, at great speed. Nor are they suffered to be merely ornamental. They are the great motive power of the country, irrigating the fields, and turning numberless water-wheels. The most obvious and constant use to which they are put seems to be the preparation of the timber which grows on their banks. Every now and then you come upon saw-mills straddling over a torrent, or perched upon the bank of a river, from which they draw a shoot of water to their wheels. They jog on all day, eating up trunk after trunk, and surrounding themselves with piles of clean, fresh-smelling deal planks and timbers. If the trees are felled where no road or axle can penetrate, they are sawn into lengths and rolled into the

nearest stream, which soon carries them down to a more accessible spot; then they are hooked out of the water and put under the saw. Many Swiss rivers are quite navigated by these logs, which are whisked down the rapids like sticks. Often, at some turn of the stream where there is a large eddy, you may see a dozen or so of them quietly sailing round and round, as if they thought the voyage over. It seems to be the sole business of some men to watch on these eddies, with long spiked poles, and push the lazy logs out into the current, when off they go. Seeing these helpless trunks blundering in an aimless sort of way down the torrent, I could not help thinking of the illustration, that you might as well expect them to form themselves into a fleet, equipped, stored, armed, manned, lying at anchor in the ocean at the river's mouth, as suppose that this world was made by chance.

The logs, when sawn up, are applied to many uses, for deal is the timber of the land. Most houses and chalets are wholly built of it, at least those in the country within reach of the pine forests. The walls and the roof consist of unpainted deal, which in a few years takes a beautiful brown colour, in time becoming as dark as chestnut. The chimneys, even, are frequently made of the same wood as the fire upon their

hearths. In some parts of the country the houses are ornamented with texts of Scripture, cut into their principal timbers. The chalets, or barns, are built of logs, notched near their ends and let into one another; thus the air is admited to the hay or whatever is stored within, and there is less likelihood of its heating, if housed before it is thoroughly dry.

On our way down from the top of the Sheideck, we came within sight of the glaciers of Grindelwald; these descended on our left from the great Sea of Ice which lies among the higher peaks. They are both beautiful, tossing themselves up in what looks like great frozen waves close to the very hayfields. The contrast between the grass and the ice, two great features of Swiss scenery, was very great to-day. The air was sweet with the scent of new-mown hay, which the peasants were turning in the fields through which we passed, while beneath lay the white pinnacles of the glaciers. June and December met. It was curious to think, that within a space measured by a few hundred yards, one man might be glad to cool himself on the shady side of a haycock, and another be frozen to death in a crevasse.

The ice, of course, as I have said before, melts fast when it finds its way down into the sunny valleys; the end of every glacier drips like a

water-cart, a white stream leaping from its foot. This fresh-thawed water is not considered wholesome, nobody drinking it, but it is deliciously cool, and several times I was tempted to bathe my dusty feet in it, without experiencing any harm from so doing.

We noticed, in walking through the hayfields immense numbers of the largest grasshoppers I ever saw: great potbellied green fellows, which jumped up to fly, and then, after fluttering a few yards, came awkwardly down like winged birds, apparently quite unable to direct their course. We picked up several and threw them high into the air, and they seemed to enjoy it immensely, taking as long a flight as they could out of the lift. When alighting, they pitch upon their noses, being provided for that purpose with a natural sort of helmet, which saves them, I suppose, from black eyes and headache.

We reached the pretty village of Grindelwald at about four o'clock, and put up at a genuine Swiss inn—roomy, but just like the little model-houses of that country

After a bath, which professed, deceitfully, to be hot, we held solemn court upon the Ogre. I paid and dismissed my lad, who, though of conrse he did not carry the monster's pack for love, expressed his determination to risk no more business with

him. Finding that there was a diligence going to Lauterbrunnen (for we had reached roads again, though we did not as yet intend to travel upon them), I arranged to send my pack by this, picking it up when we had crossed the pass to that place. Thus I hoped the Ogre would be compelled to carry his proper load at last. Not a bit; he made interest with the driver of a return carriage, and, when we started the next morning, presented himself, howling, with nothing but an umbrella.

I should add, that he carried no change of clothes or luggage of his own whatever, except a wooden pipe and some lucifers. He lived, we found, at Meyringen, and he pointed out his home, as we passed it, from the hill above the village, informing us at the same time, through P., who professed to understand him, that he was a family man. No bachelor need despair.

VI.—GRINDELWALD TO THUN.

ON consulting our Murray—to which P. inadvertently administered a douche-bath of oil, one day when he was greasing his boots—we read that "in fine weather there is not a more interesting and exciting journey among the Alps than that over the Wengern Alp." True, everybody makes

it, and therefore to some vulgar souls it may lose its charms. But it is magnificent, however well trodden. This was our route on leaving Grindelwald, and we quite forgave the Ogre for the sarcasm conveyed in his howls on account of the prospect before us. We got off tolerably early, and, after passing through fields and gardens for some time, began to breast the hill. We were to pass close under the Jungfrau, for the speciality of the Wengern Alp is its proximity to this famous mountain. Being itself more than 6000 feet high, it commands a grand view of its giant sister. It is a steepish walk to the sunmit, and we were not sorry to give our coats to a good-natured gentleman who was on horseback and offered to carry them for us. These Swiss horses are very hardy and though they do not keep pace with an active man going up-hill, yet manage to climb the most unlikely-looking places.

The Ogre distinguished himself here. It was very hot, and we came to a chalet, which had a bowl of milk set on a bench outside it. Captain W. was about to take it up, when the Ogre dashed in, caught hold of it, and without a word drank every drop, passing on afterwards with a grunt, like a hog. This was past a joke, to insult our friends, and we were not sorry to think we should be able to get rid of him at Interlachen.

Knowing that there was an inn with a remarkably fine view a little further on, we resisted violent efforts on the part of the Ogre to force us into that on the summit. The other, though rather lower down, is built on the brow of an immense ravine, directly facing the Jungfrau, and had a pleasant porch opposite the mountain, in which we soon sat down to take our lunch, and found capital Swiss beer.

This spot commands a view of the avalanches which continually fall from the Jungfrau during the summer. I had then never seen one, and think I would have staid there a week rather than have gone away ungratified. However, we had not sat long in the inn porch when somebody cried, "There it goes!" and we rushed out. A very respectable avalanche had started from the high snows, and came crashing down upon the granite ridges beneath. It looked like a white waterfall, the powder of the pounded ice rising in clouds of frozen dust. I could hardly believe that what I saw would have cut a passage through a forest or village; so much did the great features of the scenery diminish the effect. We were, I suppose, one or two miles off, at least, in a straight line, but the sharp report of the mass as it bounded from ridge to ridge, reached us like a lengthened peal of thunder. The rush lasted three or four

minutes, the mass of snow and ice pausing once or twice in its descent, and then breaking away with another leap and crash. After this we saw some small ones, and heard several echoing among the peaks.

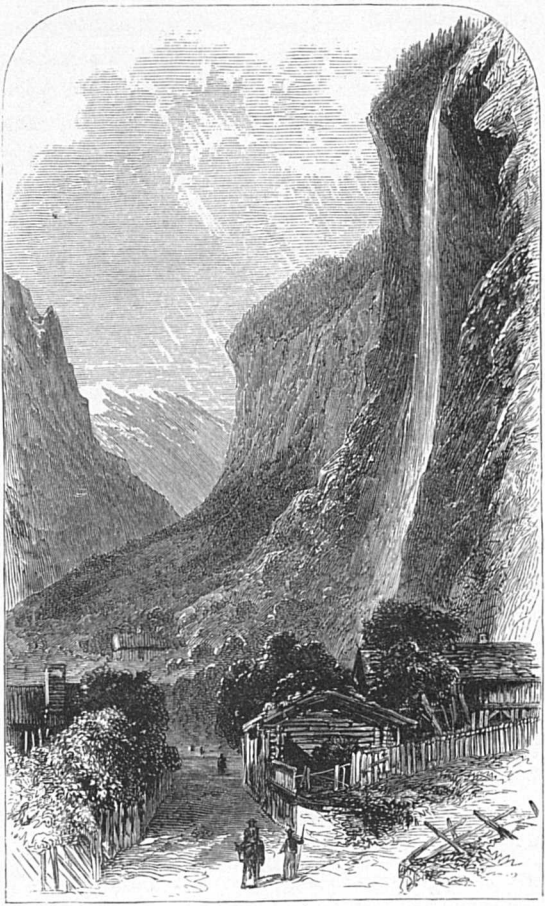
There are three kinds of avalanches: the "Dust," such as that we had witnessed, of lose snow and pounded ice. These sometimes travel so fast as to rush a considerable distance up the opposite side of the valley into which they descend.

Then there is the "Slide avalanche," when a large mass sails off like a ship from the stocks when it is launched. These, however, often pass into the former, coming to a precipiece and being broken up with the fall over it.

The others consist of snow, which does not break into powder; but "binds," and comes down with a smothering thud. These are the worst, for they suffocate the men and animals on which they descend, unless they can be dug out at once—while the dust fall is lose and comparatively light, sometimes enabling people to struggle out themselves, if not bruised by being dashed against the rocks, or buried too deep. Avalanches fall during the summer rather than the winter. Hence the travelling in the snow, or under mountains on which it lies, is most dangerous in the spring and beginning of warm weather. Indeed, as long as

winter lasts, some passes are more practicable than at any other time, the snow filling up the inequalities of the ground, and enabling the inhabitants to transport merchandise on sledges. The path is always marked by tall poles, which stick up above the snow, and look in the summer like telegraph posts. The greater danger to the traveller in winter comes from snow storms, or "tourmentes," which soon bewilder him, shutting out the view beyond his outstretched arms. Then the additional cold tells upon the wanderer, and, after dragging his drowsy limbs on as long as he can, he sinks, and sleeps to death. From the Wengern Alp we went down, at a famous pace, by a series of zigzags into Lauterbrunnen. This is a retired village, so sunk between rocks that the sunshine does not reach it, in winter, before twelve o'clock. The vegetation of the place shows this want.

The famous Staubbach is about half a mile above the inn. It is one of the loftiest waterfalls in Europe, measuring between 800 and 900 feet in height. I suppose the term cataract might be applied to it; but the stream is so thin and broken in its descent that it has acquired the name of "Dust Fall," and is altogether a very twiddling misty business. Byron, however, compared it to the "tail of a white horse streaming in the wind," suddenly enlarging the simile by adding, "such



THE STAUBBACH AND VALLEY OF LAUTERBRUNNEN.

as it might be conceived would be that of the pale horse on which Death is mounted, in the Apocalypse." Wordsworth has called it a "sky-born" waterfall; and indeed, when the clouds rest upon the mountains and cover the spot from which it leaps, it seems to come from the skies, In winter this constantly falling spray makes a pyramid of ice, which is said to accumulate sometimes to the height of three or four hundred feet.

I would advise any one who wishes to have a close view of the Bernese Chain, to ascend the hills which shut in the valley of Lauterbrunnen, near the Dust Fall, to a little place caled Mürren. There is a pleasant inn on the crest of a mountain right alongside the Jungfrau. The view is superb. The ascent is easy. There is a much-used mule-path all the way. You may find a comfortable bed at the little inn, if you are disposed to sleep there, and see the sun rise. But a few days may well be spent at Mürren, and one of them should be devoted to the ascent of the Schilthorn.

Having now reached a dusty road, we got a carriage, and drove in about an hour to Interlachen. This place is famed for beauty, being set upon the stream which connects the two lakes of Thun and Brientz. Its scenery, however, is above you. There is nothing you can look down upon

without first climbing to do so. All the hotels are set in a dead flat. The views of the Jungfrau are very beautiful certainly, especially when its snows are relieved by the deep dark-green of lower hills. But the place is desperately hot. We had been breathing the fresh air of the mountains for some time, and now felt as if we were being choked. Interlachen, however, contains perhaps more summer visitors than any place in Switzerland.

Thus we found ourselves all at once surrounded by the abomination of civilization—gloves, patent boots, and crinoline. Here is the very metropolis of easy-going travellers, timid ladies, and sick people. Swiss tourists may be divided into three classes. The most numerous confines itself to turnpike highways, roads, and lakes, travelling altogether by steamboat and axle. It contrives, however, to see much, several of the most famous passes being traversed by excellent macadamized roads. Those who stick to the highways gather in large numbers at Vevey, Thun, Interlachen, etc., which are easily reached by carriage or steamer. The worst of it is, however, that they become dressy, and spoil the associations of Switzerland with balls, and the jingle of second-rate dissipation. Gambling-places have been opened—or if not opened, winked at, in several places

Thus, instead of gaining fresh health in the glories of mountain scenery, some people wear themselves with "amusement," which would be better suited to the neighbourhood of Leicester Square. But Interlachen is cheap. The hotels are large, numerous, and good; and you may find several very comfortable places where you can live at five francs a day, whereas in Geneva, in the season, you will very likely be charged as much as that for a bedroom at the top of the house.

Next to the tourists who drive about and congregate in the principal places, come those who ride and walk, and thus reach the most beautiful part of the scenery. The greater number of the passes are crossed by mere bridle-paths, often hardly distinguished from a goat track. To me the effect of the mountains is rather destroyed by the presence of a turnpike-road and post-horses, though they may be snuffing the air at a height of six thousand feet or more above the sea level. Nothing, on the other hand, can be wilder than the course of many well-known routes which can be traversed only on foot or horseback.

The smallest—the select class of Swiss visitors—are the climbers—the Alpine Club—who often turn up their noses at the more frequented spots, however established their magnificence, and lead a life of enterprise in higher and rougher places

than the common tramp aspires to. These mighty mountaineers sometimes come down to the comfortable inns of the towns, though, to relax, eat, and be admired.

We had not been in Interlachen half an hour before we wanted to be out of it. The place was as flat and hot as a fryingpan—only the fire was above instead of below it. However, we polished ourselves up, and paid off the Ogre. Every guide is obliged to carry a book of testimonials, which are added by his successive employers, and inspected by the government. If the guide's incapacity should be recorded and established, he loses caste—perhaps his position. Now, I threatened the Ogre with an uncomplimentary line in his book. This put him into a towering passion, and on parting he made a point of shaking hands elaborately—I may say affectionately—with J. and P., and then, fixing his bloodshot eyes on me, I thought he was going to commit himself; but instead of that, he emitted a hideous snort, and stalked away. I must say, though, that happening to meet him a few days afterwards at Berne, he came up to me, took off his hat, and shook hands—an honour for which I hope I felt and showed becoming gratitude.

There is another famous cataract near Interlachen, that of the Giesbach, which falls into the

Lake of Brientz. A small steamer runs frequently to the latter town, touching at the falls. They are very beautiful, and consist of a succession of short leaps, like a tubful of water turned over on the top of the stairs. The stream is crossed and recrossed by many wooden bridges, at various heights and distances. The third fall has a gallery behind it, so that you may sit in a cave and see the world above you, through water, like a mermaid. Besides the gallery and the bridges, there are many prepared nooks and arbours at the edge of the torrent, showing it in fresh points of view. I don't suppose that there ever was a waterfall more stared at, straddled over, and generally lionized than this; people go up and down, right and left, above, across, and as I have said, beneath it. They look down upon it from the hill, up to it from the steamer, and sideways at it from the wood, until at last the cataract must be glad to disappear in the lake, which is 500 feet deep near its entrance.

The Giesbach knows no rest till then, being visited by night as well as day, and illuminated with red and blue lights; there are nails driven into several of the waterside trees, on which these fireworks are fixed.

Right in face of the falls, about two thirds of the way down, is an inn, with benches and tables

set out under trees, so that you can keep your eye on the cataract while you are eating your lunch. There is a good hotel a little way back at which many people stop. It seemed very comfortable.

The Lake of Brientz is not striking, the hills around it being somewhat monotonous. A road goes from its upper end over the Brünig Pass, towards Lucerne. We were regaled with a number of Swiss songs, while we were waiting for the steamer to return to Interlachen; three women sang together, while an old man, who seemed to belong to them, offered chaplets and garlands of flowers for sale, wearing himself a large one all round his hat. Brientz is a great place for the manufacture and sale of small articles in wood, nutcrackers, chamois and salad-spoons, with all kinds of little boxes; there are, however, plenty to be had in most villages, especially throughout the Oberland. Having only our knapsacks with us, we could not be persuaded to buy much; but I laid up a little stock of match-boxes and needle-cases, for divers friends at home, who I knew would accept them as proofs that I sometimes thought about others while I was enjoying myself. A grand present, however acceptable, has a pompous self-suspecting air about it, which destroys the modest confidence of a keepsake. It often looks more like a bribe than a remembrance; a

trifle snows reliance on your friend's affection, as well as respect for him. You can get very pretty little carved articles for a few francs in Switzerland, at least up in the mountains, for which you would pay more than double the price at home.

It was one of the hottest days I ever remember to have felt, when we left Interlachen for Thun in the steamer; the hills seemed to act like reflectors, and bring all the sunshine which fell upon them into a focus on the little quay at which we embarked.

The shore on our right was not unlike some portions of the bank of the Rhine. That on our left was far more striking, being broken by the Niesen and Stockhorn—two mountains which are of considerable height, though not capped with snow. One stands at the entrance of the route reaching to the foot of the Gemmi Pass, which we proposed crossing; the other guards the Simmenthal, a pleasing pastoral valley leading to Château d'Oex—a place which I visited upon another occasion, and is in my mind associated more with magpies and bones than anything else. The former seem to have taken the place of all other birds; and if those cautious people who believe they avoid ill luck by touching their hats or taking them off (which is considered the surest antidote), when they see a magpie, were to visit

this place they would be obliged to walk about bareheaded. The bones are in the churchyard, but I was sorry to see many of them *on* it as well. I never visited a burial-ground where so little respect was paid to the remains of the dead. Even in the gravel of the path leading into it, there were mixed many scraps and splinters of those who were supposed to be buried there.

From Château d'Oex, paths lead off towards Vevey and the valley of Les Ormonds, and a road runs to Lausanne.

But to return. The boat paddled on towards Thun, ten miles from Interlachen, creating a slight breeze by its own movement; but when, in about an hour and a quarter, it bumped against the little pier below the hotel, a pile of thunderclouds had crept up into so threatening a battery, that we were glad to step into the inn as quickly as we could. Soon, dark streaks of wind came wandering across the lake, and great fat drops of rain made spots upon the dry slates of the roofs beneath us, as big as penny pieces. We had rooms at the top of the hotel, looking over part of the town, and sat at our open windows silently waiting for the crash of the storm. Here it comes! Ah! did you see that?—Crack! and the stone cliffs flap back the peals till they seem to multiply instead of die away. Clap after clap, while the shower

comes lashing down and the roof slates shine dark and wet, and the dusty road is streaked with little yellow rivulets, in which the heavy rain-drops plunge and bubble. See, there is a dog scampering along with his tail between his legs, and a party of hens under shelter, looking out, in melancholy silence, at the behaviour of some riotous ducks.

VII.—THUN TO THE GEMMI.

WHEN the storm had died away, the hens stepped carefully out, and the sun begun to shine, we took a stroll about the gardens, enjoying the fresh smell of the earth. We were at the Hôtel Bellevue, which is outside the town, and stands like a private house in grounds of its own. From some parts of these there are very beautiful views both of the lake and town. In fine weather the scenery of the former is backed by the snows of the Jungfrau, and other of the Bernese Alps. It is very curious to see how fresh beauties open out, after cloudy weather, from places such as this. The lake itself, and lesser mountains by its side, are in themselves enough to constitute a charming view —none the less so because of clouds, which generally add much to the landscape. But when they rise, another horizon discovers itself. Fresh ranges

of peaks, covered with snow, shifting their colours as the sun travels from east to west, change the whole character of the scenery. Thus, those who have visited this country in dull weather have had many beautiful views, but have not seen Switzerland. White mountains beyond dark, showing clean and sharp-edged against the sky, are perhaps the specialities of this glorious land.

The town of Thun is very striking, being "dominated," as our French neighbours say, by an old picturesque castle and church. There are no "sights" to cry for inspection, but the streets are quaint and pleasant enough to stroll through. The Aar, our old friend whom we saw take the leap at Handek, here escapes from the lake, no longer whitened like a glacier stream, but with a full swift current of the clearest blue. I wonder what a river thinks of its passage through a lake. To my mind it must be like going out a great deal into mixed society, where you meet with fine rooms and a chilly reception; while the gathering of the scattered waters into a definite and familiar channel again, resembles the return to one's own quiet room, old coat, and slippers. I only wish that all "swells of the first water" came out of company as fresh and clean as the Aar. How many pick up the mud they meet with, instead of dropping that which marked them in their earlier course!

I know of no better place than Thun for a centre of short expeditions in Switzerland. It is accessible by steam from Charing Cross. It communicates with Zurich and Lucerne by rail. It is within a day's reach of the Bernese Oberland, the tourist being able to leave Thun in the morning, and cross the Wengern Alp that day. Again, if he wishes to visit the neighbourhood of Zermatt, he is close to the Gemmi and the valley of the Rhone, from which latter district, reached in twelve or fourteen hours from the Hôtel Bellevue, he may, if he pleases, go by Visp to Zermatt, or soon find his way by the Téte Noire to Chamouni. There is also the easy route to Vevey and Geneva, by the Simmenthal. If he wishes to plague himself with the echo of home business, he may safely depend upon letters reaching him, and receive his 'Times' or 'Share List,' every day. The transmission of letters in some parts of Switzerland is very slow. I remember, during our tour, posting one, which accompanied us for three days, the mail cart being necessarily on two legs, and not getting on faster than we did ourselves. I am not sure whether it is not best to give up all thoughts of letters when you travel in a rough district. Don't think about them, and when you come home you will find that at least one half of the heap awaiting you have answered themselves. We often labour to produce

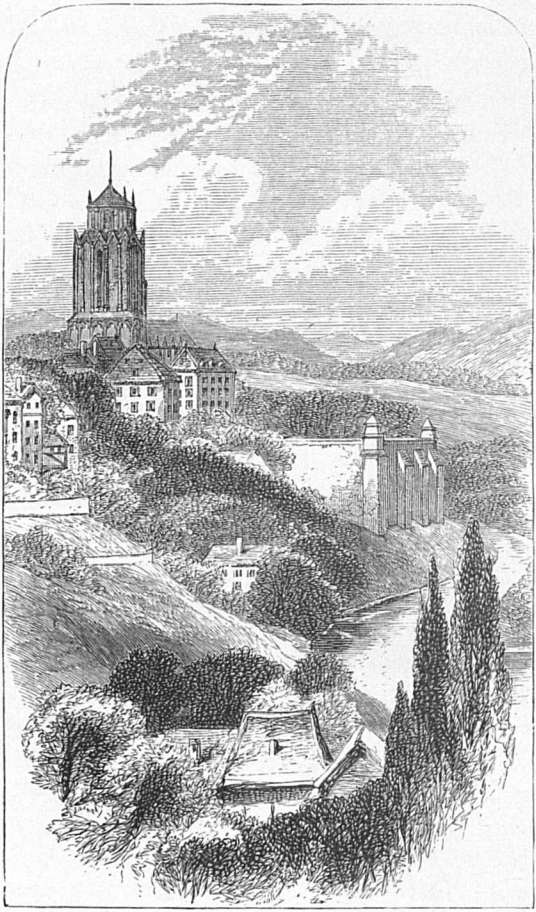
toil, and fret to multiply care. If you are fortunate enough to get a whole holiday, take it, and be thankful; don't stir the cream of your enjoyment by compelling yourself to run to the post-office directly you enter a town. Learn that even your own small world can rub on tolerably well without your advice and supervision. Many things would get themselves done better than you could do them, if you would sometimes let them alone. Have a little more human faith, and be the happier for its exercise.

We found our luggage at Thun, and rested on the morrow, being Sunday. There is an English chapel in the grounds of the hotel, where service was held twice. We had a thin sermon and a large congregation. The chapel was built by our landlord, for the convenience of his guests and profit of himself—many people making a point of spending the Sunday in Thun, because of the certainty of divine service being decently conducted there. Where public worship is held, as I have seen it, in a large room at an hotel, lined with looking-glasses and smacking of a Saturday-night entertainment, there arises a strange mixture of inappropriate sensations. Wandering eyes may see themselves kneeling in plate-glass mirrors with gilt frames. Now, the little chapel at Thun is quiet and devotional.

On Monday we went to Berne by rail. This is the seat of government. Switzerland, though, as we all know, a republic, has been by no means so united a country as might be supposed. Perhaps, however, no form of government is so exposed to civil brawls as that in which several corporations affect equal power, and are under no prompt jurisdiction. Certain it is that the Swiss have had many contests among themselves, quite as bitter as might have been expected between enemies who differ in language and religion. The twenty-two cantons of which Switzerland is now composed were first united in 1814. But a few years previously to that, this cradle of continental liberty was the scene of great oppression, the power being in the hands of a few reigning families and influential cantons. Even the brave mountaineers of Uri and Unterwalden, who had bled for their freedom, no sooner got it than they tyrannized sharply over their own dependants. Give any one sudden and great power, and he will, very probably, abuse it. The liberal reformer, in office becomes a strict conservative. The slave who is freed will trample on his late master if he can. When you let a plummet go, it will swing as far from the true straight line as it was when in your hand, in the opposite direction. But we are getting away from Switzerland and its go-

vernment. Let it suffice to mention two or three more of its characteristics. The suffrage is universal. There is no regular army; but every man is a rifle volunteer: and the people are liable to be called out to serve in the militia, which is a tiresome interruption to business. There are no passports, no custom-houses, no tolls to speak of—at least, none that interfere with the traveller's comfort and independence. The inns and roads are good, and the electric telegraph is established all over the country, ordinary messages costing a franc. The coinage is the best in Europe, pence and halfpence being clean and very light; a decimal system was adopted in 1850. The change must have been very great in Switzerland, for almost every canton had a currency of its own. Still, in six months after the new system was introduced, almost all trace of the old complicated denominations was gone. Let us hope that such a fact as this will have due weight in discussing the establishment of a decimal coinage in England.

There used to be Swiss national costumes; I say, used, for they are fast disappearing. The greatest distinction is now seen in the caps of the women, which in some places are wonderful wisps. Men have no local dress, but wear either undyed homespun woollen clothes, very clumsily made,



THE CATHEDRAL AND PLATFORM AT BERNE.

or suits of course blue frieze. In all cases their coats are short in the waist, and high in the collar. You see in the shop windows cards of the different costumes; but unless they are worn on special holidays, they are invisible. In fact, they are disappearing, which is a great pity; for a picturesque national dress is far more becoming than a tawdry imitation of expensive clothes. Cheap finery is not only vulgar, but sure to be personally unbecoming.

The manners of the Swiss differ much; the knowing Murray remarks, that "the German portion are often sullen, obstinate, and disagreeable." The Ogre was a German. We had afterwards a guide from a French canton, who was lively and civil. The poor people have been described as beggars. Some tourists may have found much mendicancy; but I can only speak of what I know; we were not pestered at all.

I shall never get to Berne at this rate; but I thought, on approaching the metropolis, I should find no better opportunity for a few remarks of general interest.

Berne is situated on our old friend the Aar, which nearly surrounds it. The town is approached by a stone bridge 900 feet long, across both the river and the valley in which it flows. It is solid and well built, with arcades along the

streets, under which the principal shops are found, and contains 27,000 inhabitants.

Happily there are few sights in the place. We didn't feel much inclined to visit the Museum, "containing one of the best collections of the natural productions of Switzerland;" for we were seeing the country itself.

The Minster is a fine building outside. There are several charitable institutions, and a tremendous prison.

The three sights we were taken to see were, the Bears, the Clock, and the distant Bernese Alps, which show beautifully from the high land about the town. The Bear is the crest of Berne, and appears everywhere, in stone, in wood, and in the flesh. There is a pit in the town, where three or four mangy brutes shuffle about, and open their mouths to the public for buns and nuts, quite unconscious of their heraldic distinction. One year an Englishman fell into their place and was killed by them. The unlikeliest death one would expect, is that by wild beasts, in the middle of a European town. But so it was; he tumbled in, somehow, and the bears killed him before he could be got out. Horrible! to be squeezed in the clutches of a beast one has read about in books of savage travel, within sight of your inn and a cabstand.

The clock tower is in the middle of the town,

and a parcel of idlers generally stop to see its puppets strike the hour, especially at noon. Just before the stroke, a procession of bears come out of a hole, and moves in front of a wooden king on a throne, who marks the hour of the day by gaping and lowering his sceptre as if he were rather bored with time himself, but graciously permitted it to pass, on the understanding that it would make itself useful to common people. Then, like a wise king, he shuts his mouth, and looks straight before him till he is wanted again.

We went up to the Enghe terrace, outside of the town, to see the Alps; at least a dozen are visible from this place, sometimes at sunset, of a glowing rose-colour. Here we hoped to look back upon the Oberland, or Highlands, in which we had spent so pleasantly the last ten days; but there was nothing to be seen of them. An envious cloud-curtain had fallen, shutting the distant view completely out; so we ate our luncheon philosophically at a table under the trees, and went back again.

The next day, having returned to Thun, we set off on the tramp once more—the luggage being sent to Geneva.

As the first fifteen or sixteen miles of our route lay along a dusty road, we rode in a small one-horse chaise, driven by the ugliest little old man you ever saw, with one eye. He carried on his

shoulder (I cannot say neck, for he had none) an exaggerated caricature of one of those india-rubber faces you buy in toy-shops. His, without pulling or pinching, went on all day, grimacing of its own accord. The beauty of it was, he chuckled in the consciousness of his own ugliness, and never looked more gratified than when he found (for we discovered that he understood a little English) it was the subject of our conversation as well as regard.

The goblin drove us to Kandersteg, at the foot of the Gemmi Pass. Having got rid of the Ogre at Interlachen, we were obliged to hire another guide, or rather porter; for as we took no out-of-the-way walks, there was little occasion for our guidance. Some time before we reached the place, while the carriage was creeping slowly up-hill, a short bilious-looking fellow joined us, and begged hard for work. The village, he said, was "pénible" in the winter, and he always expected to make a little money in the summer months by carrying knapsacks over the Gemmi. So we engaged him, with directions to be ready to start the next morning, and drove to the Hôtel de l'Ours (bears still), the little inn at the foot of the pass.

Here we found most excellent mutton and trout, served by an obliging landlord. But the rain, which had left us at Thun, came back, and a dense fog hid the mountain over which we wished to

pass. So the next morning, though our guide was hovering about the door lest we should start betimes, in spite of the wet, we staid at the inn, and compared notes with an English family which was weather-bound as well as ourselves. J. had a 'Tennyson' with him (it is a great mistake, by the way, to cumber yourself with books, which are always heavy), and now atoned for his own pain in lugging it about, by lending it to some young ladies. The day wore on. We took little excursions from the door, always persuading ourselves, against conviction, that the clouds were breaking; though at last we began to think we were, as sometimes happens with tourists in the hills, fairly shut up. It was entertaining, no doubt, to watch the jerky zigzig course of fat raindrops down the window-panes; but at last we determined to see what could be done, and set our faces towards the mountain, beginning to ascend almost from the inn door.

Our guide's professions were justified; for he made nothing of a pack which looked half as big as himself, breasting the hill as lightly as if empty bandboxes alone had been bound upon his back. Ajax (so we called him) wore a dust-coloured suit of dittoes, like a convict, and had a pale face, which belied his wonderful strength.

When we had ascended for about half an hour,

through a pine forest, a snow-storm came on, and we stopped under a tree for debate and shelter.

We put it to the vote. Should we return? The division decided no. So, turning our faces upwards, we walked on through the falling snow, up to the clouds from which it fell—through it—into fine weather above. The Gemmi is not very remarkable on the side up which we ascended it. Its wonders show themselves in the descent into the valley of the Rhone.

When we got to the top, we found a considerable space of tableland, broken with large stones and points of rocks, which crop up among the short brown grass. Threading our way through these, but seeing nothing of the scenery on either side of the pass, we came to a solitary little inn, with no more pretensions than a labourer's cottage, overlooking a dark sullen pool. Beyond this, at an elevation of 8000 feet above the sea, there is a lake full of trout.

The snow began to fall again as we entered the inn. Our landlord who was one of the merriest fellows we ever met, gave us a graphic account of the place during the winter; for months and months the snow blocked up his doors and windows; "but," says he, "I have my family with me, and am content."

In the dog-days, while harvest is going on in

the world beneath, and fruits ripen, and children play in the shade upon the grass beneath the trees, this spot remains a scene of desolation; there were, however, two or three chubby little brats about the house, who romped before the door with as much interest as if their father lived in Paradise. Well for us all, when we can thus become like them, and find equal pleasure in any place which is a home. The urchins of St. Giles's, provided they are not starved or houseless, get, I will venture to say, as much happiness out of this life as the young lords and ladies in the nurseries of Grosvenor Square. Stand behind 'Punch,' and see a row of them sitting on the kerbstone, and taking an undiminished interest in the reiterated drama; look at the bank of little faces, wrinkled with fun. Why! an honest poor man's child is as happy as a prince, ay, often more so, I fancy. Has he no marbles, pegtops, battledore?—wooden, to be sure, and not so elastic as it might be, but effective. And as for riding in a carriage, isn't a box with wheels three inches in diameter a far more independent and manageable vehicle? Can't you tumble out of it with safety, and quite enjoy a complete upset? Don't tell me of the privations of an honest labour's or artizan's child, with bread-and-butter in the cupboard, and a good game of play after school. Even our little Swiss up there,

in the long winter, among the snows and peaks, laughed and tumbled about as if the stones were haycocks, and the hard cold ground a soft lawn of grass.

VIII.—THE GEMMI TO ZERMATT.

THE landlord of our little inn, which bore the disproportionate name of Schwarenbach (big enough for a town), was smiling at the door as we walked up, and showed us at once to a blazing fire—very acceptable here, though at home people were sitting outside their doors in their shirt sleeves.

"What will you have?" says mine host.

"What have you got?" replied the guests.

It appeared that he had everything—on paper, like the Turkish army—and a *carte des vins*, which promised any wine we chose to call for. Of course he had only one cask for the catalogue. However, being ordered in a general way to "get dinner ready," he hastened to supply us, and in so doing amused us greatly, He put the dishes on the table with such triumphant comments, and stood smiling by, as they disappeared, with such confidence, that one would have thought he considered our object gained, and that, after a dinner on the Gemmi, we should find the rest of Switzerland tasteless and flat.

Well, we ate and drank what he brought in, and then, leaving our shoes to dry round the wood fire on the hearth, were shown up a broken stone staircase, as rough as that from a pier, into our bedchambers. The rooms were very low, and beds high, so that a fly walking across the ceiling looked about a foot off, and on waking one fancied that the bed must have "risen" in the night like a loaf.

Some German students had come in the course of the evening, and one of them was chummed with me. His toilet in the morning was not profuse. Having heard him use a few English words the previous night, I, to flatter him, put my head out of the bedclothes between four and five o'clock (it was a bright hard frost), and said, speaking very slowly, "It—is—fine—to—day—" "What-youmean?" he replied, uttering the three words in one. So I repeated it once more, slower; but here our conversation ended, as, after thinking what I meant for some minutes, he gave it up, pulled on his trowsers, his boots, washed his hands (forgetting his face), and then, drawing, himself up, said, very quick, "Allright," pronouncing it without a break, like "Allsopp," and stumped off.

It was bitterly cold when we started. The ice had sucked up all the water in the puddles, and we moved on briskly with our alpenstocks under

our arms, and our hands in our pockets to keep them warm, Ajax with his load leading the way. For two miles our path, though rough, did not rise much, lying by the side of the Dauben See, the lake which I have mentioned before, then crisp with little waves. Two or three peaks above us shone red in the morning sun, when quite suddenly we came upon the edge of the pass. We had been walking on the flat roof of a Brobdignag house, and were now looking down over the eaves. The path seemed to end at the brink of the precipice; you might let a plumb-line down into the valley beneath, nearly 1600 feet, almost without touching the rock. Here a magnificent view was opened, a great portion of the Valais Alps, some forty miles distant, being spread out before us, bright in the morning sun. We had now come to another family of giants, and the familiar forms of the Jungfrau, Finster Aarhorn, Wetterhorn, and Münch were left behind. The most striking rock in this fresh group was the Matterhorn, or Mont Cervin, which rises almost like an obelisk of hewn stone. Its height is said to be more than 14,000 feet. There have been great discussions whether Monte Rosa is visible from this place; we fixed on one huge pile of summits, and were on the point of settling the thing at once. But we were wrong. It was the Breithorn, I think. Quite

latterly, however, it has been positively settled that a portion of Monte Rosa *is* visible from the summit of the Gemmi Pass.

Far below us, in the shade, looking with its blue roofs like a heap of slates on the ground in a builders yard, lay the little town of Leukerbad; then came the valley of the Rhone, then, range after range, topped with a great jagged border of snow-peaks. We sat down at the edge of the rock for some time, enjoying the view, which was all the more striking, because we had so long been shut up in the rugged platform of the pass. Then we prepared to, descend generally too easy and tempting a task, though now we were loth to leave our lofty station. The road is, perhaps, the most striking in Switzerland, being channelled out of the face of the rock; though in many places it bulges out and overhangs itself as if it were stuck on. Once or twice, as we walked leisurely down in single file, I called out, "Hallo! J., where are you?" "Here," said a voice just above me, and there was his black head, showing over a turn of the path, like a martin peeping out of its nest.

Murray says of the Gemmi, that there *is no danger in it* (the italics are not mine), and that it is practicable for mules—"donkeys" I should call those who rode down it. The path is from three to five feet wide; but a mule invariably walks

close to its outer edge. This arises from these beasts being in the habit of carrying burdens, and getting as far as they can from the rock, which hits their packs, and puts them out. This may be very sagacious; but when you are riding, and the precaution is not necessary, it is very disagreeable. The brute creeps down carefully enough, as if he were smelling his way, but when he comes to a turn he goes as close to the brink of the precipice as he can—your outside shoe being frequently clean over the edge. Sagacity may be a very fine thing, but I confess I prefer reason myself, and my own two legs, to any four belonging to a mule.

Besides the unquestionable risk of the beast stumbling—a lady was killed one summer through it—there is the disagreeable possibility of slipping over his head, since it is thrust out beneath you, like a donkey's at the crisis of a kick. The fatigue of riding in this position for hours is very great. A mule descends a pass perhaps more slowly than he ascends it, and always keeps to the zigzag of the path; while on foot you can often cut off corners and shorten your walk considerably.

Not that such an abbreviation is possible on the Gemmi. A step over most of the corners there is a short cut indeed to the end of all your tours, for it would very frequently take you five hundred

feet at one stride. I am referring to ordinary passes, down which there is often a steeper descent than by the usual zigzag, but practicable only for men on foot. As it is, mules coming down-hill always look as if they ought to have their hind legs taken off, so much do they tilt the beasts up.

When we reached Leukerbad our engagement with Ajax ceased, and he introdueed us to a friend of his, Michel, who took charge of our party from that place. Directly we entered the inn the waiter asked us whether we would visit the baths which make this village famous during the summer months. (The place is shut up and abandoned between October and May.) Of course we would see the baths. So he led the way along several stone passages till he reached and flung open a door through which we entered the bath-room. The building, which is oblong and lofty, contains four pools or tanks, twenty feet square, in which bathers (under medical law) remain and soak sometimes for six or eight hours a day.

The water, which comes from hot springs, is deep enough to cover the shoulders. Ladies and gentlemen, all wearing suits of brown cloth, bathe together. In the tank on the right hand of the door as we entered, were three bearded foreigners and a young damsel, their heads only above the surface. The tanks are navigated by little cres-

cent-shaped floating tables of wood, on which the bathers lay their books, work-baskets, or chess-boards. Here some of them remain nearly all day, eating, knitting, and checkmating one another up to their chins in hot water.

There was a melancholy old gentleman who waded about with his snuff-box on a little raft before him, and an officer singing, with his mouth open like a Triton.

These hot springs are, I believe, considered very useful in cutaneous disorders; such being the case, one would think a bath to one's self preferable, but the tedium of eight hours solitary soaking is worse than the company of strange fellow-patients.

After looking in upon this parboiled society for some time, we returned to the inn, had breakfast number two, and an interview with our new guide. He proved himself very serviceable in some respects, but his curse was drink. When he remained a day or two in a place he was sure to take too much of the horrible kirsch-water, with which the Swiss fuddle themselves and make their heads ache.

After we had rested a while, we set off towards the Rhone Valley, at first by a broad highway. Here we saw and passed Albinen, a village which is accessible only by ladders. There are about

eight or ten of them, planted nearly perpendicularly against the face of the cliff, on the top of which the houses are built. There is no other way to the place except by balloons, which come expensive; consequently, the lady residents invented a bloomer costume, long before it appeared in America, and when they return from market, walk home as independently as sailors mounting the rigging. I imagine that society must be select there. It is no joke for a neighbour to make a morning call. The guests who accept an invitation to a party have to crawl up like a storming party, and take their dinner by assault. Fancy asking the Joneses, the Smiths, and the Robinsons, and their all swarming in over the house front like firemen.

After we had descended some way by the road, Michel took us rapidly down by a series of cruelly rough short cuts. In fact, he was showing off, for he swung along at the top of his speed. We were not bad walkers, though, either of us, and we soon cured him of that. Before long we suddenly emerged from the last descent, and found ourselves on the great flat highway which threads the valley of the Rhone and leads over the Simplon, then lying on our left, into Italy. The dust was ankle-deep, and the glare of the white road very disagreeable. When, therefore, we had walked to

Tourtemagne, and had our lunch—bread and cheese, with delicious country wine—we took a carriage and drove on to Visp. Here we met a snuffy little Frenchman, who overflowed with self-gratulations at having fallen in with this same wine. He began about it directly we sat down to dinner, winked, held his glass up to the light, and laid his hand upon his tight little waistcoat, in the most touching way. What could have brought him there I can't think; he did not look like a bagman or a tourist; I am inclined to believe he was simply a bilious glutton, trying by change of air to renovate a jaded palate; he talked of nothing but of eating and drinking.

When we had got into the inn at Visp, and were washing our hands before dinner, Michel came upstairs to us, and insisted on our handing our boots over to him to be shod with fresh nails. They weighed, I should think, nearly twice as much when he brought them back. We found the nails, however, of great use during some rough work which followed.

The walk from Visp to Zermatt is a very tedious one of ten hours. The path is plain, and ascends slightly all the way, running sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left of the stream which descended the valley we were penetrating. Zermatt, however, is most frequently approached

by this route, being surrounded on all other sides by high Alps. Hour after hour we trudged on between the hills, which sometimes opened out into a little plain, and then closed into a gorge, but never allowed us to turn a corner or change our pace. There is, however, a halfway village, St. Nicholas, where a comfortable inn and refreshment may be found. We passed several places where the road was destroyed by earthquake in 1855. At last, when it was growing dark, we reached Zermatt, and gladly found our way to the Hôtel de Monte Rosa.

Zermatt is a village which looks as if it had been caught in a snow trap, being by itself 5400 feet above the sea, and surrounded by high Alps. There is no path to the place except over ice passes, and the one crack in the circle of mountains through which we had crept. Even that, though not very steep, is impassable by wheels. Suppose you were to drive to Visp, and then get astride of your nag, you would, as horse-power is reckoned in Switzerland, have to ride nine hours before you could put him into the stable at Zermatt. It is set in one of the grandest spots in Europe. For years and years tourists wandered about Switzerland, wrote, apostrophized nature, and broke their necks, but no one hit upon this quaint little place, with its old wooden houses,

brown with storm and shine, and its threefold glaciers creeping down from either side, as if the Alps were pointing at it with their icy fingers. Yet no one took the hint till some few years ago, and now it is the rage.

Certainly there is no place in the Alps from which a wilder set of walks could be taken than from Zermatt. It stands near the junction of three valleys, each with its characteristic glacier. Monte Rosa looks down upon it from one side, the Matterhorn from another; between these and around them, rise a crowd of mountain tops, whose snows and ice are threaded by those trackless routes which lie among the higher Alps—passes which show with tempting accuracy on the map, but which must be found and followed not by the steps of those who have used them, but by compass and landmarks like the sailor's course at sea —paths which have been trodden for years upon years, but in which the drifting snow ever fills the print of feet, and makes the latest traveller as cautious as the first.

Beyond the range of glaciers and peaks which hem Zermatt in, lies Italy; just over the sharp snow edge, you look upon a land of vineyards and olive-trees, mellowing in the sun—while here, in wintry Zermatt, scarce a blade of wheat will ripen.

One of the great recommendations of the place is the variety of excursions it provides for those who do not affect much walking. Ladies can ride easily right into the centre of the wildest Alpine scenery, and see themselves surrounded by glaciers, while they sit in the saddle. At the same time the devoted climber may be practised in the highest training, and inspired with the daily presence of the terrible Matterhorn, now at last ascended; but on whose head no foot had ever stood; around whose base, and up to whose very shoulders, wistful baffled mountaineers had groped and struggled year after year in vain.

Zermatt is the head-quarters of the Alpine Club —I speak unofficially; we found several of them at the hotel—men who came to Switzerland season after season to climb. But it struck me that they were very much "done." No doubt they often surpassed natives themselves. There was no nonsense about them. They were not only skilled in the principles of ice-work, but had considerable local acquaintance with the peculiarities of different glaciers. They were keen-eyed, clear-headed, supple-sinewed; but I repeat it, they looked "done" with the work.

J., P., and I had walked some nine or ten hours the day we arrived, and when the dinner-hour drew near were by no means displeased at the

smell of cooking being perceptible all over the house. But when the bell rang for the guests to sit down, I noticed that several of those who had been taking the most severe exercise were far too wearied to eat their food. One left the table after tumbling a mutton-chop about his plate, and went to bed; another was so bruised on the hands, he could not cut his meat.

I am sure that many young men overdo the thing. Where science is advanced by daring and danger, all honour must be paid to those who knowingly venture their lives; but where the object to be attained is simply the top of a hill, at any risk, because it is the top and not the bottom, then I suspect dangerous climbing to be a questionable selfish luxury. The guide is paid to make the ascent, he climbs for his bread. The season is his harvest. However enthusiastic, he looks close after the profit of his business; but your unscientific tourist, who, though no great mountaineer, must needs drink a bottle of champagne on the top of Monte Rosa because he has never done so before, is a brave fellow, no doubt; though, in case he breaks his neck, he is in serious danger of being mistaken for something else. Still we cannot hear and watch an Alpine enthusiast without seeing that there is a charm, almost unique, in cutting your way, axe in hand, right into the very

"keep" of Nature's strongest castles. And those who are skilled, cool, and tough, seldom come to harm. They are your presumptuous, untrained tourists who bring discredit upon mountain enterprises. Your true cragsman sees danger while the other feels none.

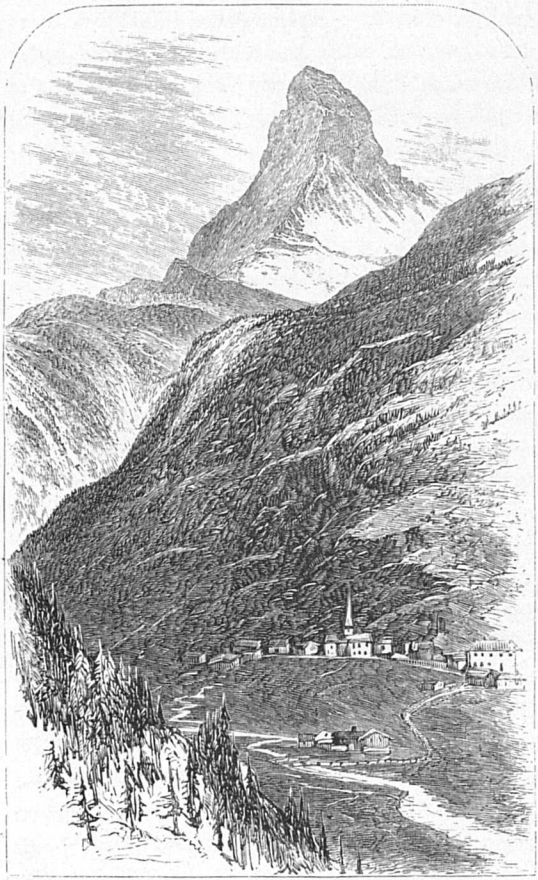
IX.—ZERMATT TO CHATILLON.

THE excursions from Zermatt are endless—guide-books give you a number. Beside the outer glories of nature, there are stores of those riches which the naturalist covets. The insects, minerals, and plants of this neighbourhood are varied, curious, and accessible. I am not an entomologist myself—not exactly; that is, though I love almost all living things, and take a great interest in insects, still, I cannot pretend to recollect the intricacies of their nomenclature. But be assured of this—that throughout this trip I did not see a —well—ahem! a bug. But seriously, the naturalist will be deeply interested with the life of this elevated spot.

As to the excursions, though varied in themselves, though you set off day after day in a different direction, and feel the impulse of discovery freshen up every morning after breakfast, there must be a sameness in their descriptions. I will

take you only to the central point of view, most characteristic of the scenery about Zermatt, which is accessible to those who ride, and then we will go over one of the ice passes and see what there is on the other side of the great Alpine chain.

One morning we transferred ourselves and our traps from the hotel at the village to a solitary inn on the Riffel, a hill two hours' walking above Zermatt; we passed on our way through a forest, and then came out on the clear shoulder of the mountain on which the house was perched. Here we secured bedrooms, and, leaving our knapsacks, walked on to the summit of the Gorner Grat, a point between 9000 and 10,000 feet high, and standing in an amphitheatre of snowy mountains. The path up was wild and rough, great patches of snow lying among the stones, and fresh heaps of broken rocks succeeding one another, as on mounting each you thought you had reached the summit. At last we gained it, and a very positive unequivocal top it was. I hate those summits which are so large that you have to traverse them in order to reach the views. Here the cap of the mountain was a few yards wide, so that we could see the panorama by merely turning round. It is considered the grandest near view of high Alpine scenery. We sat there for some time, surrounded by peaks, passes, and glaciers. The heaped-up



THE MATTERHORN.

summits of Monte Rosa rose heavily above them all, its huge banks and slopes of snow looking so close beneath us, that it seemed possible to pitch a quoit upon them. But between the breast of the mountain and us, there flowed a river of ice, measuring more than a mile across. Four glacier streams, marked by their lateral moraines, were joined together here, and seemed to sweep in a monstrous tide or race around the cliffs on which we stood, down into the valley behind us. So flood-like was the ice, that at first you could fancy you saw its masses heaved and rolled along. They were moving, it is true, and on a still day you might possibly have heard the ice waves groan and crack as the glacier ground its slow progress over the rocks; but when you looked steadily, all was motionless as death. Carrying the eye along to the right from the summit of Monte Rosa, it travelled over five snow mountains, and then making a slight dip, showed us the Pass of St. Theodule—our road into Italy. After this came the bare, solitary Matterhorn, and then—— ; but there was no end to it. We turned round and round, able indeed to verify the summits from the map before us, but feeling the distinction of names rather an impertinence than otherwise. Immediately behind us, as we looked towards the Pass of St. Theodule, was the Findelen Glacier, in a

crevasse of which a Russian gentleman perished miserably in 1859. One guide had crossed in safety, another was about to follow him, when he slipped into the crack; as the men looked over the horrible brink, they saw him far below, wedged in between two walls of ice, with his head down, waving his right arm, which was free, for help. They lowered their rope, but it did not reach his eager clutch. They ran to fetch another —for miles, for ages, it seemed. Five times did the hour hand of the prisoner's watch creep its tedious round, and all that time he waved his arm, slower, and slower, and slower—in dumb piteous entreaty—until at last it dropped.

Of course, when the tragedy was over, every one knew how it might have been averted, and the Chamouni guides were loud in their condemnation of the blockheads of Zermatt, who let their master die. Nothing is easier to do than the deeds which a rival has failed to perform, when the chance of doing them has passed.

We picked up a fourth companion, F. at the Riffelberg. Captain W. had gone back some days before. On our descent to the inn we all stopped, and had a snow-balling match. Did you never feel how, when you have been under grand and solemn influences, nature is obliged to throw in a few gambols to restore the proper balance of

seriousness and gaiety? What prigs those people are, who can't or won't ever unbend. I think a man ceases to be one when he cannot easily become a boy again, though it be only for an hour. When we got to the inn, we found a party just arrived from the top of Monte Rosa; one of them was suffering rather from inflammation of his eyes; but they were all getting their tea very comfortably. Tea is a grand thing after unusual exertion—when you can't get any dinner. These gentlemen said they had made a very successful ascent, the view over Italy being unclouded.

Next morning, which was Sunday, we got up with a pleasant prospect of rest. There was a little service twice in the inn, and we wandered about the rocks around it. We hoped to ascend the Cima di Jazi the following day, and looked at it with an air of contingent possession. This mountain is only four or five hours' walk from the Riffelberg Inn, and gives a grand view over the plains of Italy. But we were disappointed; on Monday morning the snow fell so thickly that we could not see ten yards from the windows of our rooms. The ground was soon quite white. This made the view from our inn wintry indeed. When the cloud lifted, which it did once during the morning, we found ourselves in a world of snow; the lower hills were whitened the higher

were never anything else. It was very solemn, that arctic scene, in the middle of harvest. Of course there was no Cima di Jazi; indeed, no going out with any comfort. One party descended to Zermatt: we watched them from the door; their battered knapsacks, and somewhat travel-worn clothes, looking very old and dirty in the fresh white snow.

Luckily we had plenty of wood, and so kept up a blazing fire. I read through an ancient newspaper left by some tourist, and played chess with a Frenchman, who continually put back his piece when he found by my subsequent move that he had made a bad one. However, I didn't correct him, as he seemed to be enjoying himself amazingly; but I contrived somehow to give him two drawn games, in which he might retrace his move as much as he liked, and be none the better for it. This settled him, and satisfied me. Meanwhile, the snow came down, and so did a foreign engineer from one of the ice passes, bringing an arctic atmosphere along with him, and creating a halo of mist about his face like the moon, when he sat down wet through to a hot dinner. We had scarcely recovered from the change of temperature he caused, when two more parties entered, hungry and cold. These nearly put the fire out, though J. kept possession of the bellows, and blew hard for an hour.

Though the inn on the Riffel is now a much larger and more pretentious affair, it was then very small, and had but one sitting-room, a rough deal-boarded apartment, which seemed to grow smaller as the number of guests increased. Two or three German ladies who were there brought out their knitting, and worked their elbows and tongues. The males of their party lit their cigars. What, therefore, with this and the foggy engineer, we had a room full; but we were very merry, and when night set in, piled a great heap of logs upon the hearth, and played at Christmas.

Michel came to us in the evening with the prediction that it would be fine the next day, and that we should be prepared to cross the St. Theodule. He was right; early the following morning, when I woke myself (it was pitch dark, but I knew it was time to be stirring), he crept into my room like a cat, with the announcement that there was a clear hard frost. Having dressed ourselves as quickly as possible, and swallowed a hasty breakfast—for we had many miles to walk, and could lose no time—we set off to the glaciers which we had seen below us from the Gorner Grat. We took a Zermatt guide, who struck across the ice till he reached some rocks, which we had to climb on all-fours. When we had scaled them we found ourselves in a plain of snow into which our feet sank, much having fallen within

the last few days. It was of the purest white, and lay over the huge gently-rounded shoulder of the mountain, as smooth as an unwrinkled mantle. Right across it, rising up as clean and sharply-edged as a steeple seen over downs, rose the Matterhorn, glowing bright red in the sun, which has not yet reached us.

I shall never forget it. This obelisk, sticking up out of a vast swell of snow, looked like what I fancied, when I was a little boy, the North Pole must be, at the end of the round world—only a trifle rosier.

But I didn't trouble myself much about the North Pole then, for the seeming depth of snow really covered in some parts a glacier, which, though generally safe enough, was then rather crevassed, and had to be crossed cautiously. I thought we had lost our front man in one. We were not tied together, as we ought to have been, and all at once, instead of a guide stalking along, I saw nothing but a head, a knapsack, and a pair of hands. He had slipped into a crevasse, but, striking his alpenstock deep into the snow, hooked himself back, and scrambled out. We paused, and went more slowly, the first man feeling his steps, and calling out to us to put our feet into the prints of his. I was last, and found them rather deep when they came to my turn. Once I popped into

a crevasse up to my middle, and felt that I could kick about in space, and hit my toes against something hard and upright, like a wall; but I got out somehow, on my elbows, though I seemed for the moment all heart, and was a pulse.

It was bitterly cold; we wore veils, and the guides had worsted mits over their great rough hands. The wind was so keen that I tied a handkerchief over my ears, to prevent their being frost-bitten—not at all an unusual thing here, the little particles of loose snow stinging like small shot. When we had reached the summit of the pass, we found a hut into which we crept. It was about eight feet across, and so full of wood smoke that we had to sit down or be choked, there being a stratum of "breathable" air only about four feet from the floor. This hole was kept by a brown, withered little old man, who immediately began to make us comfortable, by mulling some wine in a frying-pan; when done, he poured it into a basin and handed it to us. Then F., who had been very quiet all the way up, broke silence, "That," said he, putting down the empty vessel, "is the right thing in the right place."

The hut on the St Theodule is the highest habitation in Europe. Its walls are about six feet to the eaves, and it is almost pitch-dark inside. Without the cold was intense, and the

glare of the snow blinding; this, of course, helped to make the interior more gloomy.

We rested here about three-quarters of an hour, getting easily over the glacier in our descent. Breuil was the next place we stopped at, and made a capital lunch—all but J., who was out of sorts, but very pluckily insisted on doing the whole day's work.

Lunch over, we looked into Italy, and followed a stream down the Val Tournanche for several hours. Having stopped to rest for a few minutes, when we sat down outside a village inn, we pushed on to Chatillon, which we reached at eight o'clock. The descent into Italy is superb. From the summit of St. Theodule you look over a crowd of peaks towards Piedmont, and, standing in winter, behold summer beneath you.

The last part of our road led us under trellis-work of vineyards, the grapes hanging in rich purple clusters over our heads. It is strange to pass through so great changes of climate during the day. In the morning, hard frost, icy wind, and a horizon of snow—except where broken by the bare cold rock. A walk for hours over glacier and winter drift. Then the soft air of an Italian valley—a harvest moon—great plates of peaches on the table at supper, and all the windows of the bedrooms set wide open to the pleasant evening

breeze. We had stepped from December to August without taking our boots off, and yet we did not find the change in the least trying. Man accommodates himself to every sudden variation of temperature, as well as of climate; he can live with alligators in the steaming heat of a tropical river; or with reindeer among the icebergs of Lapland; with camels or chamois. He can take an air-bath up to 160°, then have cold water pumped on him and walk off only with a better appetite for his dinner, and quiet sense of refreshment.

We were now unmistakably in Italy. The character of the houses was changed—no more brown villages of weather-stained deal. The inn was thoroughly Italian; the shape of the loaves, the taste of the wine, the voice of the waiter were all different; so was the lounging, lazy look of the people who were sitting on the parapets of the town bridge, and strolling slowly about.

I was kept awake for some time by a roar outside my windows, like that of Piccadily in the season, and, on getting up in the morning, found a torrent boiling along some sixty feet beneath, and so close that I emptied my basin into the very gorge down which it rushed.

I might have added, when we were at the top of the St. Theodule, that there are several other ice passes into Italy from Zermatt, the most famous

of which is the Weiss-Thor. It is, however, somewhat difficult for those who have doubts about their heads. The snow-passes into the Valais were, however, used by smugglers, it is said, in preference to others. Travellers used to be examined by the custom-house officers when they descended from the St. Theodule; and close by the hut, on the summit of the Col, there are the remains of the redoubt thrown up three hundred years ago by the Valaisans, which marked that frontier of Switzerland—rather a useless labour, since the Alps did it distinctly. It is as if there were a row of buoys in the middle of the English Channel, to draw the line between us and the French.

X.—CHATILLON TO CORMAYEUR.

HAVING now reached a level dusty road again, we took carriage and drove down the vale of Aosta, intending to stop there a few hours, and then go on to Cormayeur. But when we had got some way we projected a détour to the monastery of St. Bernard, intending to sleep there a night, and then take up our old route again.

As soon, therefore, as we had had our lunch, we set off, leaving J., who was not quite well, and moreover had already visited the monastery, be-

hind us. It was a good six hours' walk up-hill, and the heat at starting was excessive.

It was a fête-day at Aosta, and the town was full of country folk. I never saw such ugly people in my life—though the term ugly is not half forcible enough; I doubt whether there is any appropriate word in the dictionary. They were painfully, grotesquely hideous. Most of them had huge goitres, which wagged about under their chins like raw materials for a second face. Many were cretins, or idiots. The number of these miserable helpless creatures is very great in some places; they sit outside the doors of the houses, grinning vacantly at passers by, though occasionally they have wit enough to beg. I do not know which is most horrible to look at, the cretin with his great head and idiot face, or a badly goitred woman. The two affections come from the same cause, as they are most frequently found in the same place. Physicians have differed about their origin; but they are said to be found principally where the water and the air are stagnant. Dirt, with bad ventilation, the great parent of disease, has probably something to do with them.

Our holiday-makers at Aosta were, however, polished up for the occasion. They had no beauty to set off, for many of their faces were not only very small, as if they had been drained into the

goitres, but battered like halfpence, and of pretty nearly the same colour. The old men and women, of all ages—for the very babes seemed stricken in years, and infancy looked like second childhood—had their best clothes on, in honour of their patron saint, and had made some apologies for not washing. They were happy after their sort—these wizen, wrinkled mannikins and witches. They had a public ball that evening, plenty of bell-ringing, crack preachers in their churches, which were crammed, and fireworks at night. Many of them walked about hand in hand. Some of the men wore tight red swallow-tailed coats, and all, enormous shirt-collars, rising on either side of the goitre up to the level of the cheek, "like gig shafts," as Bob Cratchit's did on Christmas evening.

We set off to the monastery at one o'clock, and for some time met more shirt-collars coming into the town hand in hand.

The view of the valley of Aosta is much more beautiful as you ascend. Indeed, few valleys show to their full advantage when you are in them. You must try to rise, if you intend to find out what beauties there are in the world. As long as you lead a low life, you will only meet with disappointment in those scenes where you promise yourself pleasure. There is one of the finest views

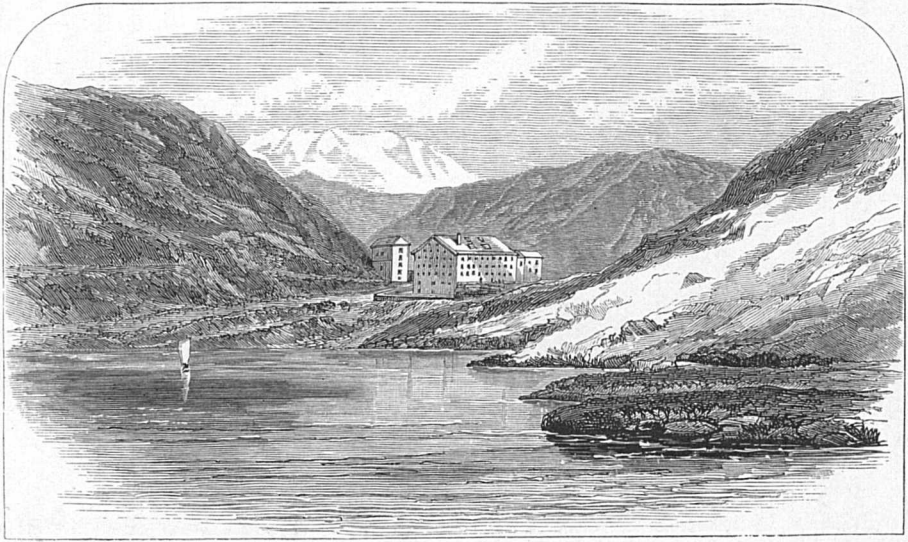
in all Switzerland from the Becca di Nona, about 8000 feet above the town of Aosta, which a good walker with a day to spare here ought to ascend. We did not do so. Balls gives the panorama from its summit, which is visited by many tourists, ladies included. However, if you do not happen to have Balls' Alpine Guide with you, you can buy the lithographed panorama in Aosta.

Our path now lay up the other side of the valley. When we had drawn clear of the goblins, and ascended for some time, Michel said, pointing to a shabby little inn by the way-side, "Here is the best wine in the country." We were dusty and dry, and so needed little persuasion to verify his statement. The room we entered was hot, and swarming with flies, which blackened a strong-smelling cheese upon the table, and held a constant tournament against the windows, butting at them in droves. Two rough forms completed the furniture, and three yellow skinny little women were sitting within, one of whom turned out to be the hostess, the others guests. The wine, which was fetched cool from an inner store, was not strong, but most delicious. We praised it to the landlady; and Michel, anxious to make himself agreeable, asked the ladies how old they were, and whether they were married or not; adding, to us, that he hoped to be so himself the following

Christmas. He was a merry fellow, and always carried a quantity of lucifer matches loose in his pocket, with ends of tallow candles for greasing our boots. Whenever his pipe went out, or any of us wanted a light, he fetched one out without any feeling for it, as if he had a peck, and giving it a dexterous wipe on his trowers, presented it burning.

Refreshed with our rest, we walked on up the St. Bernard. The road is passable for wheels as far as St. Remy; but from this place begins a stiff pull of an hour and a half—the more sharp, as Michel took us up by a number of short cuts, which lessened the distance, but increased the fatigue.

It was now growing dark; but presently the moon rose full, and, showing the valley yawning black behind us in the shade, shone full upon our path. The night air grew biting cold, and we buttoned ourselves up as closely as we could, though we were walking fast. As the track drew near the summit it became much wilder, winding among rugged masses of rock, and I looked eagerly for the first glimpse of the famous monastery. At last, turning a corner, we came upon it—appearing exactly as I remember seeing it once in some diorama, when a child. The moon was at the full; the surrounding peaks blackly reflected in a



ST. BERNARD LAKE AND HOSPICE

little lake hard by; lights twinkling in the monastery windows, as those within moved up and down.

At the monastery door, to which we mounted by several stone steps, were a few poor people and guides; behind them, holding up a lamp, which threw straight streaks of light out into the darkness, stood one of the monks, ready to welcome travellers. As we stumped in, with our long sticks, he beckoned us into the great room, where we found lights and a blazing wood fire upon the hearth. Supper was over; but our host, the monk, called a servant and bade him bring us meat and wine at once; so we sat down and made a capital meal. The wine, which was excellent, was supplied to the monks by the king of Sardinia. Supper finished, we crouched round the fire, for the cold was extreme; and another good-natured monk coming in with an armful of fresh logs and a pair of bellows, piled them upon the fire, and soon blew it up into a roaring blaze.

The room was large, and very comfortably furnished, there being a piano, and plenty of stuffed chairs. Our host left us after a little chat, and before long we were glad to go to bed. Then we were taken down a stone arched corridor, and shown into a long narrow room, with one deeply-recessed window at the end, three beds set against

the wall, three chairs, three basins, and three pegs to hang up our clothes. I thought of the story of the three bears.

Soon P., F., and I were fast asleep, to be awakened in the morning by a peal of church bells, hung not only within the walls, but under the roof of the monastery.

The sun was rising as we dressed, and we were reminded of the high air in which we were—8200 feet above the sea level—by a keen hard frost, which, though August was roasting the valleys beneath us, froze water spilt upon the floor within the building.

We breakfasted at six, a monk presiding. This was a feast day at the monastery; hundreds of peasants came up from the valleys to pray and feed. There were many in the chapel and about the kitchen door. The groups of these, in their quaint country costumes, and baskets for dole—the monks bustling cheerfully about, superintending the distribution of the messes, made a scene like the pictures of hospitality in the middle ages.

We made acquaintance with the dogs who have made the hospice so famous. There were then only six of them. They are tall, powerful, brown animals, with short hair, at some little distance not unlike bloodhounds, but in expression of countenance, especially in the eye, reminding me of New-

foundlanders. The stories of their carrying little casks and scampering all over the mountains to look for travellers are a great exaggeration of their actual services. Poor people cross the St. Bernard Pass in large numbers, even in the winter. The snow is then thirty feet deep; and near the monastery it is almost as dificult for the monks as for strangers to find their way. Then the dogs have their day. People ascending stop at some little distance below the summit (on the very crest of which the hospice stands), and take shelter in a house which is used for this purpose. The monks make a clearance, or jail delivery of this refuge, every now and then, as they have reason to believe the prisoners accumulate. A servant goes down from the hospice with a dog, and brings out the party he finds waiting at the shelter. Then the dog sticks his tail straight up, and walks leisurely back to the hospice, the servant and the rest following him in a line. Thus he really does guide travellers and save lives; for it seems that sometimes he, and he alone, can find the way home. The monks don't generally go out themselves, but send a servant. The dog is the hero. At times, when the messenger goes down to the waiting-place, he finds a half-frozen traveller, who has tried in vain to make his way up unguided; but the people know the rules, and seldom fail to

wait for the pilot dog, who plies daily, weather permitting, over the worst part of the pass.

We had evidence that some wanderers were lost, beyond resuscitation, in visiting the Morgue, or deadhouse. This is a low building close by the hospice, divided into two rooms, into which you look through an iron grating. In one of these are heaped the stray bones, and skulls, and splinters of those who had been killed, and then dismembered, perhaps by the grinding of avalanches, or the dashing of torrents from the melted snow in summer. In the other are kept the entire bodies of those who have been frozen to death and never claimed. These were set against the wall—some bolt upright, others painfully crouched up, as if they had tried to cherish the last spark of warmth before they died. In this dry air flesh is not putrefied, but withered up. It was a ghastly assemblage. In one corner stood a women, still fondly but vainly wrapping, in the rags she wore, a tiny infant, frozen to death in its mother's stone-cold arms. She was found one summer, when the snow shrank, and there they set her, with her withered face bent over her babe; but no one ever knew her place or name.

The monks of St. Bernard are young men. There can be no living to old age there. They generally enter upon their duties about the age of

eighteen, and remain as long as they can, being removed to more genial quarters if they sicken. The air here is too dry and keen for human lungs to breathe for many years. There is another house at Martigny, where the brethren go when they can stand St. Bernard no longer.

We visited the library and kitchen. In the former of these were prints of our most gracious Queen, and of the 'Great Eastern.' The monks are very pleasant and polite, but take no pay. There is a box in the chapel, in which you may put something for the poor; but they don't point it out to you, or give the least hint of a donation. Those who visit the monastery for pleasure, however, ought to leave behind them more than they would have paid at a hotel, for the money taken from the alms-box is applied by the monks to the succour of poor travellers, who have nothing but thanks to bestow.

Between eight and nine o'clock we bade adieu to our kind hosts, and turned our faces downward. At St. Remy we got a car, and, in company with a Southern American, whose heart was in his native land, and whose tongue incessantly abused the Northern Yankees, reached the grapes and sunshine of Aosta before noon. After this, picking up J., we drove along the valley, in clouds of white dust, to Cormayeur, where we arrived at eight o'clock.

There was a profusion of figs for supper. Another party had come in before us, and thinned the larder seriously. Delicious as fruit is, especially after a dry and glaring day, it is very trying stuff to work upon. You may be sure that it is not labour alone that hurts a man, but labour without sufficient food, or with food of an inferior quality. Hard work may be very amusing to gentlemen for a while; but let them take a spell at hard work and hard fare together, and hear what they have to say. Give a man plenty to eat, and then you may work him, head and hand, back and brain; but an empty stomach soon breaks the strongest will and clouds the clearest brain.

We were not sorry to get out of our carriage at Cormayeur, though we did have short commons when we got there; for our coachman from Aosta was so drunk, that Michel had to take the reins out of his hand and drive nearly all the way—not without many severe comments on his own infirmity, when exhibited in another person. Oh, Michel! I venture to say that though you were sober just then, you were the tipsiest of the two, if the truth were known, only you found it pleasanter, like many others, to condemn your neighbour instead of yourself, no doubt unconsciously justifying yourself, on the ground that the fault, not the offender, was bad—and that therefore, if

you could see your own sin out of yourself, it was best to lay on thick.

We fell in at Cormayeur with a second hat. I had been the butt of the country and my companions for wearing a *bonâ fide* hat. I consistently defended it, making only one concession. Mine was black—it would have been better white. Were I to write an essay concerning hats, I should put the crown of victory on the chimney-pot. I believe that so catholic a covering would not have been adopted without good and deep reasons, by civilized people. I admit the occasional inconvenience of a conventional hat—say when travelling in a railway carriage by night; I admit that it is often made too heavy, and that a black one is hot in the sun. But a hat which is strong, though light in weight and colour, possesses great advantages over caps, wide-awakes, and other European coverings for the head. It protects you from a blow; it sticks on in the wind—a cap does that certainly; but a wide-awake is always taking flight. The hat, nevertheless, is easily taken off by the brim, when you want, for instance, to make a bow—frequently a needful gesture abroad,—while a wide-awake has to be lifted up from the top like a dish-cover. Then, when you want to hang it up, a hat remains securely on the peg, while a wide-awake will no more submit to be so suspended than a

basin—always slipping off—unless you can find something upright, like a wig-stand, to set it on.

Again, wide-awakes afford no ventilation—of course I am talking of limp ones; for those which have a tight rim have all the supposed drawbacks of a hat without its advantages—I say that wide-awakes afford no ventilation; the leather lining of a soft one sticks to the forehead like diachylon plaster. There is no air-chamber between the top of its crown and that of the wearer's, but it fits the head like a felt skull. On the other hand, a good *bonâ fide* hat allows a free circulation, except just where it catches the forehead with firm yet elastic grasp. This is but a slight sketch of what might be said in support of the much-abused hat. I was glad, for its wearer's sake, to find another at Cormayeur.

Whoever visits this place should ascend the Cramont, and have the grandest near view of Mont Blanc. Saussure said that the six hours he passed on its summit were those in which he derived more pleasure from the study and contemplation of nature than any others in his life.

XI.—CORMAYEUR TO CHAMOUNI.

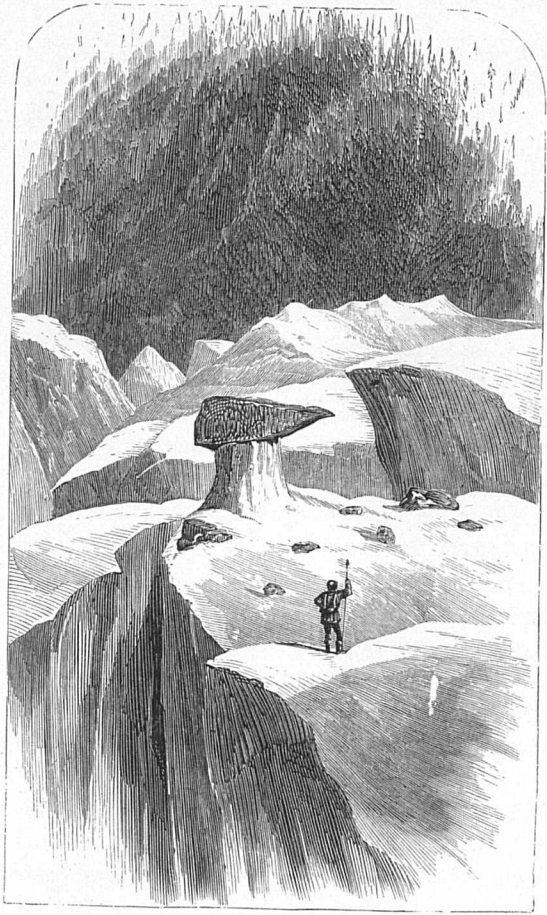
FROM Cormayeur there is a short cut to Chamouni, over the Col du Géant; but we did not attempt it, having heard that it was just then very badly cre-

vassed. Indeed, we had our doubts whether Michel was quite up to such a walk, although he professed himself equal to anything in the world of ice, and would have undertaken to recover Sir John Franklin, single-handed. Instead, therefore, of trying this pass, we went on with what is called the tour of Mont Blanc.

The great mountain rose directly above us on our right when we left Cormayeur. It was a fine fresh morning; so, walking briskly, we soon found ourselves by the side of the Glacier de la Brenva, which we skirted for some time, and which appeared to rush down a gorge on our right, in great waves. This view was the most striking, as we had it through trees, which almost, if not quite, overhung the glacier in some parts. After following it for an hour and a half we came to a huge moraine, that of the Glacier de Miage, which fills the valley, and took us a good hour to cross. It was disagreeable walking, but gave us a lively idea of the locomotive powers of a glacier which could carry down and deposit such a heap of rubbish. There were masses of rock as big as a largish house, with stones and fragments of rock innumerable. The moraine was a small mountain in itself, and looked like a little colony sent down from Mont Blanc. It is curious that the heavier stones do not sink in the glacier which carries

them; indeed, the bigger they are, the less likely are they to do so—in some cases they rise. How so? Thus. The glacier shrinks from several causes. The sun has a considerable effect upon its upper surface, which in the middle of the day, in the hotter months, is wet, and covered with little rills. Now, when a large flattish stone lies on the ice, it screens a portion of it from the heat. By degrees the sunshine melts, and therefore lowers the glacier round the stone, which then stands upon a short column of shaded ice, until it breaks, and the stone begins to construct another base, by protecting it from the melting rays of the sun, and rises again. These mounted stones are called glacier tables. It is very curious to see a great piece of rock resting on a thick pedestal of ice, as if it had been set up by the Druids.

Passing the moraine, we came upon a lake, at the edge of which, on the left, our path now lay. A great portion of it was dry, and I was for cutting off an angle, and so saving a mile. I had got some distance, when Michel shouted so fearfully that I supposed there must be some cleft in my way which I had not perceived. No such thing. I retraced my steps, but found I was merely leaving the path—to find—a better. Oh, you guides! You are as great red tapists in your way, as may be found in Downing Street.



A GLACIER TABLE.

Surely there is much to be said about unqualified submission to any guides at all—any human ones at least—that is to say, if a man is to be *great* in travel: Columbus had none. The presence of a guide almost negatives discovery. Let him lead you where he can; the next thing is to go where you believe a better, higher path may be found—to excel your tutor, to advance from the vantage-ground to which his experience and skill has conducted you. Then comes the trial. The guide is almost sure to dissent. *He* never went further—he thinks you ought not to try—that you cannot succeed. Then, I say, comes the trial of the true man. Then comes the test whether he has caught the genuine spirit of progress, whether he has learnt to walk himself, or has merely been led.

Surely, this applies to everything—to the pursuit of all science and truth. The best *human* guides must be surpassed; the true pioneers of our race must not shrink from setting foot onward, though not merely the wiseacres, but often the wise men, shake their heads and stop, like old guides who have found and followed a safe path for years, and, with all deference to their skill, and all gratitude for what they have done, will not believe that the younger, fresher man, will extend the common stock of knowledge, and be in

his turn passed by his successors. Here is a long digression.

After having been called back by Michel, and then finding I was right and he wrong, we came within sight of the first of the passes we had to cross that day—the Col de la Seigne. We walked fast; I should say that we were rather incited to do so by a party of French gentlemen who started before us from Cormayeur, but whom, in a spirit of friendly rivalry, we had already passed, and before whom it behoved us, as representatives of our country, to get to the top of the pass; they were lively young fellows, but, pausing to talk, and making a pretence of singing as they went, we beat them hollow, getting to the cairn on the summit nearly twenty minutes in advance. The view, as we turned and looked back, was very magnificent. Mont Blanc is so well known from the Chamouni side—has been exhibited thence so often—that we felt ourselves here to be behind the scenes. How different are the hidden places of nature from those of art! There is no unfinished side to any of God's works—no heap of useless rubbish—no tangled tags and ends which the Maker would conceal if he could. When man makes *his* mountain, there will be a heap of wheelbarrows, broken trucks, and what not, at the back. The rear of Mont Blanc, as it may be termed, is magnificent.

From the Col de la Seigne we descended to Motêt—hardly better than a double cottage, the halves of which appear to be rival inns. The meat was bad, and the wine worse. If one could get a good slice of hearty English bread in these places, the rest of the fare might be what it liked; for there is always cheese and butter. But the bread is poor spongy stuff, and often disagreeable to the taste.

Our way down to Motêt lay in parts over steep grass, which made the soles of our shoes as slippery as ice. Here we found the invaluable use of an alpenstock; without mine I might have slid away for miles, I think, or spent a month in getting down, an inch at a time. As it was, we made the descent rapidly, Michel sliding away, quite indifferent to the cargo of lucifers in his coat tails. I fully expected to see him sputter into a flame, and go off altogether.

We had now the heaviest part of the day's work to come; on our right rose a mountain ridge, over which Michel tried to point out the dip of the Col des Fours. This route is not often taken, and for a long time we found no signs of a path at all. The most general plan is to go a little lower down to Chappiu, then turn over the Col du Bonhomme, which is some 800 feet lower than the Col des Fours. We chose the latter, and had a hard tug to the top—on and on, over beds of black shale,

and occasionally a place where the ground had got wet and slippery, I suppose from the melting of the snow. This hill-climbing has all the fatigue and none of the excitement of glacier work. There is no danger, but dull toil: you go pounding on, till at last your legs seem made of lead; then comes a revulsion, fresh powers are developed, new muscles seem to be called into play, and you can often do the last five miles of hard day's walking better than the first. It was so with us then; we got over many long miles before supper, and came in as gaily as possible, in the cool of the evening. As long as you have good health and strength, you may train them to carry you anywhere.

But the Col des Fours was a dead struggle of two hours. At length we reached the ridge of the mountain, and stood in the little gap, a few yards wide, which commands the view on either side of this Alpine chain. It was worth the climb. Before us, as the last few strides took us to the summit, rose a sea of mountain tops, backed at a distance of some sixty miles by the Jura. There was not a cloud above our heads, but a few were entangled, like wool, among the peaks around us.

We sat down here for some time, and then descended by a very wild rough path into the valley, where, white and distant, we could already see the houses of Les Contamines.

Our route had now joined that over the Col du Bonhomme, and was marked by tall posts, useful even then, but necessary in winter, when this must be a fearful route. On our way we passed the cairn, erected over the spot where a lady was once killed in a tourmente, or snow eddy, The wind sometimes whisks them off the mountains, and woe to the wanderer on whom they alight. Every traveller is expected to cast a stone on this monument, which has in consequence now attained a considerable size. We each added our mite as we walked by in single file.

Ere very long, we found ourselves once more in pasturages, and passed through large herds of cattle and cows, walking leisurely homewards to be milked. Each had a large bell round its neck. It need be large, for it is intended to guide the cowherd from great distances, these animals being famous climbers, and often spreading themselves over a large uneven tract of mountain-side. The ringing of these bells, when many beasts move or graze together, is a very striking feature of Alpine sounds, the tintinnabulation—I am thankful for having got over that word, though now I don't feel quite sure about the number of n's—filling the air for miles, and sounding at a distance like the hum of a million bees over a field of clover. Presently we came to some chalets, toward which

the streams of cattle flowed, and around which there was quite a lake of cows. Leaving this on our right, we entered a pine forest, through which a path led down to a small inn at Nant Bourant; here we rested half an hour, and somebody walked off with Michel's alpenstock, which he had laid down for a few minutes. It was now growing dark, so we made the best of our way to Les Contamines, down a path which was more like a cataract of stones than anything else, This was cruel work for those with sore heels, and poor F. walked gingerly behind us, like a man with bare feet going down rocks to bathe.

Night having come on, we were not sorry to find ourselves in the inn at Les Contamines, having had roughish paths most of the day, and crossed over two passes with a considerable hollow between them.

At supper we met a couple of Irishmen, who were going up Mont Blanc the next morning, by the back of the mountain. Many prefer this route, as it saves them from the exorbitant charges of the Chamouni guides, an ascent from the latter place costing not only fatigue, but pounds into the bargain.

Beside the Irishmen, who were in the highest spirits, there was a party led by a grumpy Englishman, who found nothing to his mind in these parts.

Tiresome fellow! why could not he stop and mind the world at home, instead of trying to spoil our supper by his selfish complaints in such an out-of-the-way place as this?

F. and I were lodged up a ladder over a stable, which smelt abominably, with a strong flavour of goats in addition.

Next morning, after Michel had been in and tallowed my boots, I joined the others at the inn (for the bedchamber was fifty yards off), and we started for Chamouni over the Col de Voza.

But a word about this greasing of the boots. The mere rubbing of the boot with tallow is not enough—nothing like it. Michel was perfect in the process. He came into my room early in the morning, and taking about three inches of tallow candle out of his pocket (where he carried the lucifers loose), squeezed it up in his hand like putty, then, with his thumb inside the boot, and that vacant look of the eyes which accompanies an act in the dark, he spread it on thick, with a great affectation of exertion, and many grunts, bringing his hand out with no more grease on it than on that of a hairdresser's in constant work. Thus welcomed, the foot slips softly into the boot, and you may walk anywhere for any time, without fear of blister or sore. The addition of a little soap inside the stocking makes it fit like a second

skin, and prevents the least wrinkle when you put on your shoes, especially if you damp the soles of your feet with a little spirit.

Les Contamines is only about eighteen miles from Chamouni, so we had an easy day. The view from the top of the Col de Voza, about half the height of Mont Blanc, is very fine. From the "Pavillon de Bellevue," an inn built on it, you look over, or rather down the Valley of Chamouni, and upon "the mountain." Here, having plenty of time before us, we rested a while, enjoying the magnificent scenery, and then descended to Les Ouches, a village at the foot of the pass, whence a carriage road, but not a carriage, took us into Chamouni.

Chamouni has been public property ever since poor Albert Smith established his entertainment. It has been described, re-described, and panorama'ed till every one has a tolerably familiar second-hand acquaintance with it. Let me give my first impressions—I was disappointed. The range of Aiguilles, leading up to Mont Blanc, passing from sharp granite peaks to rounded masses of snow is very grand. But the scenery is too gigantic to be easily accessible. The view from the windows and balconies of the "Hôtel de Londres," where we stopped, is as fine as any in the place; but there is little close by to which you can stroll and be alone. There are excursions without end.

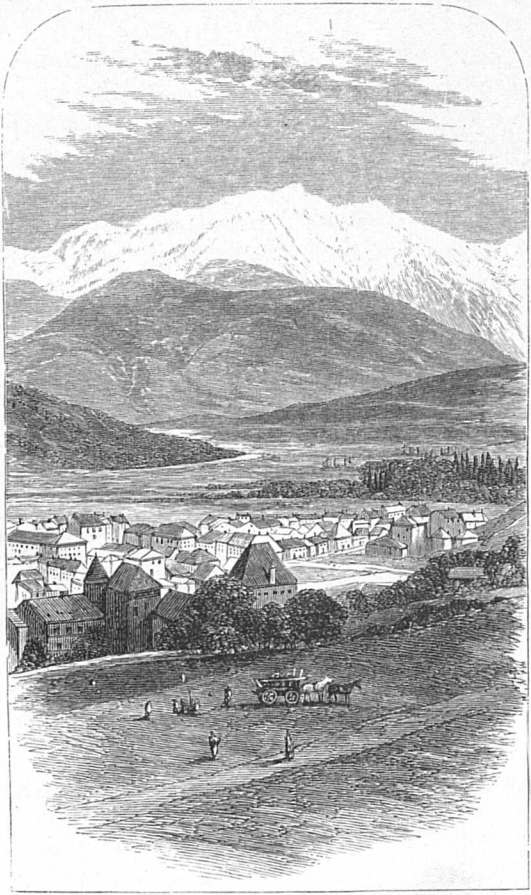
I will not describe them. Every one has heard of the Montanvert, the Jardin, or grassy rock in the midst of ice, the Breven, the Flegere, and the Buet, famous spots, from which you look upon the giant, or stand in the wildest scenery of glaciers and peaks. The grandeur of the views from these places is notorious; but to me there is something in the bustle and civilization of Chamouni itself, which takes off the edge of Alpine sensations. Instead of descending into a valley, with its quiet inn and pleasant surroundings, you return after your day's work to a grand hotel, with its crowds of waiters, English company, crinoline, and kid gloves.

This very contrast may add to the attraction of the place in some eyes; but you may be excused for disliking the atmosphere which asks you to dress for dinner after spending the day on a glacier. In fact, the place itself is too much like Albert Smith's late exhibition. There you associated evening costume with the terrors of the avalanche, and heard the *patois* of the guides by gas light, in the midst of a "fashionable assemblage." But Piccadilly was outside the door, and the cab fare to half Cockneydom only a shilling. Now, here the guides and glaciers were genuine—here was the thing itself; but here was the company too. Much as I believe Albert Smith contributed to the fame of Chamouni, and the benefit of its innkeepers,

one would have been glad if it had not smelt so strongly of the Egpytian Hall. Therefore, I confess I was disappointed. The return to London is always pleasant to those who live there; but it is not desirable to meet it when you descend from a pass among the Alps—as I seemed to do when I entered the elegant "Hotel de Londres" battered and dusty like a tramp. To add to the resemblance, I am sorry to say that Michel immediately got drunk, and we were sadly vexed at having an official come to us on Sunday, and complain, in pure British grumble, that our guide had been making himself troublesome. There is an English chapel and a fashionable congregation, in which our thick highlows—for the luggage was at Geneva—looked singularly out of tune. No blacking could make them decent again, after Michel's tallow, and one of our party actually went out and bought a pair of patent boots to accommodate himself somewhat to the look of the place.

XII.—CHAMOUNI TO LES ORMONDS.

AT Chamouni my plans were unexpectedly altered, and I presently parted from my two fellow-travellers, J. and P., to see such small remainder of the Regular Swiss Round as appears in this first trip, in company with E., whom I joined at



MONT BLANC, FROM SALLENCHES

Geneva. I think it would be better for any tourist who takes our line to go from Chamouni, say over the Tête Noire into the valley of the Rhone, and take Vevey on his way home, instead of going to it as I did round by Geneva. And here let me say that I do not think any one can take in more of Switzerland in one trip than we did by this, which has now landed us at Chamouni. Our trio was now broken up. We had had a most pleasant walk, without hitch or disagreement of any kind; and when, early one morning, my companions, with their alpenstocks in their hands, ready to start off on some excursion in the mountains, saw me into the diligence, I felt how completely the pleasure of my tour had resulted from their heartiness and good humour. I seemed to be deserted, when the coachman cracked his whip, and the carriage got under way, though three Americans filled the other three corners of the vehicle, and our eight knees left a space in the middle no bigger than an umbrella-stand. My new companions, however, were very sociable, and talked through their noses till they were choked with the dust, which accompanied us, like the clouds in Guido's Aurora.

At Sallenches, where we stopped for some time, I strolled away to enjoy the view of Mont Blanc. Somebody—Humboldt, I think—has called it, "the

grandest mountain scene in Europe." It is perfect. You want nothing. Martin, in his happiest moods of fairyland perception, never brought together the possible or impossible beauties of nature into such a focus. You stand upon a bridge —the river is edged with trees, and glances far away in graceful turns. On either side, at varied distances, with changing tints of rock, pine forest, and grass-green field, stands a graceful pile of mountains, while in the midst, far above them all, rise up the giant masses of Mont Blanc, passing from rock into snow, over the great swells and plains of which the tide of sunshine sets in glorious change of ebb and flow. The summit of the mountain is twelve miles distant from the place on which I stood. The day was superb; and I was quite sorry when the conducteur of the diligence recalled me to the Americans. They were pleasant fellows enough, though, and, when not suffocated, we had a babel of talk.

E. and I put up at the "Hôtel des Bergues," at Geneva, a dear, well-placed inn, close to the Lake, where the Rhone escapes from it in a stream of the deepest blue, and where the water is so clear that, when you lounge over the parapet, the tethered boats look almost as if they were suspended in the air beneath you; and you can count, if you like, the oyster-shells, pieces of

tobacco-pipe, and old shoes, which dot the bottom within range, at a depth of several feet.

Geneva, associated with the memory of Calvin, Rousseau, and Gibbon, is a hot, stony place, full of radicals and tobacconist shops. It is a fine-looking town, though, from the water, and seems to lead a lively existence, there being many party feuds, as well as a brisk local trade. The Lake is here like an arm of the sea. It is navigated by large craft, with felucca sails, as well as by steamers. The waves are sometimes so great, that sensitive tourists, who try to put the recollection of the English Channel out of their minds till they return to Boulogne, are unpleasantly reminded of the "steward."

At the other end, the mountains which hem it in destroy this sea-like appearance; but here the banks are low, and the wind blows steadily for hours.

The neighbourhood of the town and lake is fringed with villas, and schools seem to abound. There are few sights in the place; indeed, it is best known to most English tourists as one of the gates of Switzerland.

The view of Mount Blanc, over the water, is very beautiful, and recalled to me, pleasantly, the valleys and passes around it, which I had so lately traversed. We proposed spending a fortnight about the upper end of the Lake, and the valley of Les

Ormonds, which leads from the Rhone, some way above Villeneuve. Thus we soon left Geneva in a steamer, and, passing by the well-placed Lausanne, landed at Vevey.

It was a stifling day. You pitied the people in starched neckcloths anywhere. Cloth felt like a blanket which had been warmed at the fire. The thought of hot roast meat was that of cannibalism. There was a stillness and grandeur in the view from the terrace to the hotel, which overlooked the Lake, making us feel that something tremendous was coming; and so there was. The clouds gathered and bowed down over us till they burst, pouring out a double deluge of fire and water for an hour. At last the air recovered itself, and the sun returned with a fresh breeze, which broke the reflection of the rocks into a crowd of little glancing waves, and patted the side of a skiff at our feet. Then we sat upon the terrace, looking at the end of the day—a glorious spectacle of itself, whether seen over the flats of the dry desert, or here, where lake and mountain made the face of the earth as much unlike sand as it can be. I don't know anything which touches the thought of what most people imagine fairyland to be, more quickly than the view of the Lake of Geneva from the terraces of Vevey. Perhaps fairies, being little mites of things, would be contented with

arrangements on a smaller scale, and find scope enough in a field or a flower-bed; but that is only a private opinion. People said this was like fairy-land; and it is a serious matter to set your own notions, however right and sensible, against what "people say."

We drove from Vevey, to the Castle of Chillon; here is another hackneyed place. Byron advertised it, and everybody since his time has tried to fancy himself under the influences which touched *him* when *he* was there, with varied success. Some have felt dreadfully prosaic, even bored, but dared not say so. Others have quoted Byron in their letters, when really they knew no more of the "Prisoner of Chillon" than of "Zimmerman On Solitude," a volume which comes always at the end of booksellers' catalogues, and owes its notoriety to its place; like the wooden spoon in the Cambridge list of honours. Seriously, though, if you would get Byron out of your head, and think for yourself, Chillon is a striking situation, and the inside of it melancholy and suggestive. The "tortute hall," where the mast still stands up where recusants were hoisted, fire being applied to their feet, is so near the "hall of justice," that you receive a terrible impression of "right" and "might" being almost convertible terms in those days when Chillon was in all "its glory."

The silence and isolation of the castle are now disturbed by the railroad, a cutting on which has nearly filled up the space between Chillon and the shore with barrowfuls of dirt. The halls which echoed the shriek of the prisoner, hear that of the engine. There is a station at the castle, where tourists and sightseers are dropped. The trains pass within stone's throw of its walls.

Traffic is opened some way up the valley of the Rhone. The railroad will eventually pass over the Simplon, and join the family of Italian lines. Thus before long the steam-whistle will be echoed by the peaks of the Alpine pass, and you may go from London Bridge to the Rialto almost on the strength of the same flask and packet of sandwiches. But, however convenient, the railway does upset the receptive faculties of the romantic traveller; nay, an unimaginative tourist like myself, receives a shock at the past and present being rudely struck together, as they are, at some spots which have been disturbed by the locomotive. For instance, there is a railway station at Pompeii. Every one has feelings about that place, which are as solemn as they are curious; and therefore, on visiting it for the first time years ago, I felt a little jar, like coming to a short step in the dark, on seeing the guard swing himself out of the van, and, chucking down a brown-paper parcel, walk

along the platform, bawling out "Pompei!" as if it had been Swindon.

There was nothing to surprise us in the fact of a station at Villeneuve; we had found it in 'Bradshaw,'—so we took tickets for Aigle, and waited for the train. The Rhone, which enters the Lake here, does so in many channels, and sneaks in as if he didn't like it. The fishery of the place is reputed to be curious, being carried on by torches at night; but we associated with it nothing but heat and unpunctuality. At last we got off, arriving at Aigle directly, it seemed, after we had started, so swift was the train, in contrast to the little chaise, in which a dull horse, with a swarm of flies about his head, and the reins generally under his tail, had dragged us to the station. Aigle is a great place for the grape cure. People go there and eat grapes all day—no bread, nothing but meat and grapes—sometimes, they say, as much as eight or ten pounds weight, without immediate mischief.

At Aigle we turned up the Val des Ormonds, which leads into the district of the Diablerets, and is connected with the Simmenthal, and thus with Thun, by a low pass to Château d'Oex. Here was the end of my first trip. We spent altogether a fortnight in this valley before returning to England; and a very pleasant sojourn it was. In the next chapter I will tell you something about the

walks in its neighbourhood. Now we will settle down quietly in the place for a day or two, and look a little more closely than our movements have allowed us hitherto, at one of these Swiss villages. It is, perhaps, as good a specimen as we could choose, excelling in several national characteristics. For instance, the cheese and butter of Les Ormonds is said to be the best in the land. There, too, the most celebrated shots are to be found, the inhabitants of the valley priding themselves upon their skill with the rifle. It is also a Protestant, liberty-loving place, and the people seem to be not only honest and civil but really religious. We attended the service at the church on Sunday. All Sepey and his wife were on the road, beside many from the numerous chalets which are dotted about the sides of the valley. Having ascertained that the only service was to take place at ten, we joined the stream, and reached the churchyard twenty minutes before that hour. Passing through a little black gate with the words, "Dust thou art," in French, roughly painted upon it, we found several groups of peasants, in their Sunday clothes, lounging about, and exchanging the news of the week. Being nearly all dairy-people, the important question of whose cow had calved was no caricature of their inquiries. The women wore dark limp woollen gowns, tight in

the sleeve, and short in the waist; their headdress consisted of a black silk or velvet cap, generally surmounted by a large flat straw-hat, with a crown shaped like a hand-bell, much too small for the head. Many carried books wrapped up in clean pocket-handkerchiefs.

As we entered the churchyard, an old man in blue frieze took his pipe out of his mouth, and hat off his head, wishing us good morning. He told us that the pasteur from Leysin, a neighbouring village, was coming to help their own, because the latter intended to have his first baby baptized that morning. Finding we were English, he chatted on. "There was much *amitié* between the English and Swiss." I asked among other questions, knowing that the valley of Les Ormonds was famous for its riflemen, whether he knew that some Swiss had taken part in the late great shooting-matches near London. No; he had heard nothing about it; he was only a "pauvre montagnard;" and asked whether it was not necessary to cross the sea before reaching England. The valley was his world, and the pasteur his hero—a "bon pasteur"—he always addressed a poor man in his working-clothes as "Monsieur;" a "très bon pasteur," who had no pride, because, as he taught them himself, "Notre Seigneur said the servant was not greater than his Lord."

We went into the church, an old stone-building, with a blunt steeple. It consisted of a nave and chancel, both filled with rough deal-seats, turned towards the communion-table, which was set under the chancel arch. The pulpit, which was also reading-desk, and had an ominous hour-glass fixed handy by it, in a little frame, stood close by. It was then occupied by the clerk or precentor, who was reading the Bible, in a clumsy drawling way, to a few old women, till the service should begin.

We took our seats, the people dropping in, until the church became nearly full. The men and women sat apart. As they entered, many stopped inside the door, and placing their hands reverently together, and shutting their eyes, put up a short prayer. Presently, the pasteur of Leysin, in a black gown with very large bands, came in. As he walked towards the pulpit, he bowed to the congregation, several of whom rose to return his salutation. Having performed his private devotions in a corner, he nodded to the clerk, who, still remaining in the pulpit, read the ten commandments, the people standing. This done, he shuffled down, and the pasteur took his place. He was a large heavy man, with a tremendous cold in his head. After an exhortation and a few prayers, the people sat down, and he gave out a

hymn. Having no book, we could not see the words, but they were sung, or rather bleated, to the Old Hundredth tune, very slowly. This was the only part the people took in the service. Not a single response did I hear, the minister repeating even the creed by himself. A collection was made during the hymn, by a man who went round with a large metal ladle. After the hymn came the sermon, then the Old Hundredth again, a few more prayers, and the benediction. The prayers were read, the sermon was extempore, or at least without book. After the blessing, many left, but several stayed to see the pasteur of Sepey's child baptized.

There was no font, but a large slab of black stone under the pulpit, on which—the clerk having gone out to fetch it—sat a small covered metal jug of water. The pasteur, who baptized his own child, performed the first part of the service from the pulpit, and then walking down, poured water first into the hollow of his hand, and then on his infant, without taking it into his arms. The kind-hearted man nearly broke down in uttering the solemn words of baptism, and set off a number of poor women, who showed the sympathy between them and their pasteur by the tears which stole down their honest brown cheeks.

After the baptism, a herd of hobbledehoys were drawn up in front of the pulpit, and catechised. Poor boys! the pasteur was very kind, but they didn't half like it. There was the strange minister from Leysin sitting in front within two yards, and some gentlefolks from Aigle, who had come up to see the pasteur's child christened, and dine with him afterwards—for we met a lot of good things going up to his chalet as we walked down into Sepey—and besides, I was sitting right opposite to them, looking as if I knew all about it. So they shuffled, scratched their heads, dived into the pockets of their Sunday-breeches, and consulted the roof with the usual success, for the pauses became more and more awful, until the pasteur singled out the best, and put him through his paces for the encouragement and recovery of the rest.

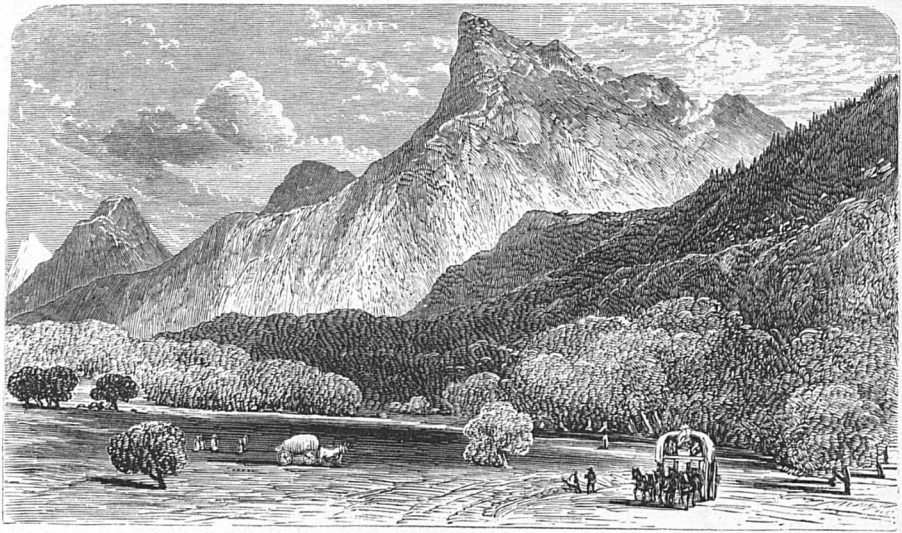
The following Sunday, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, the congregation quite filling the church—the number of men being as great as that of the women. Almost all communicated. The pasteur stood at one end of the table, the men walking up first in line, and receiving the bread and wine standing, without the pause usual in English churches; the remainder of the congregation sung meanwhile. Their behaviour was most devout. Here, then, were the

free-hearted, independent fellows, each with a vote and a rifle, who did not think themselves too wise to communicate at the highest act of outword worship. These men would have resisted the least encroachment on their rights and liberties to the death. True independence of spirit—that is, the honest superiority to mere human saws and sentiments—will always go along with religion and courtesy. They are your suspicious unsettled men—men uncertain of themselves, no less than of their position—who affect freedom by bluster and rudeness. These Swiss were very polite, though they were a rough-looking lot; and I never spoke to a man without our touching our hats to one another, and sometimes taking them off.

There are no what we call gentlemen's houses in these parts. The habitations are alike, though of different sizes, and every one is engaged more or less in the tending of cattle, which abound. The owner of large herds will drive them home himself, and you may see the syndic, or chief personage of the place—answering to the town mayor or county magistrate—working in the fields with his coat off. Wages are tolerably fair, considering the cheapness of living, men getting from two to three francs a day; but there are many small proprietors who own a patch of grass-land and a cow, or a few goats, and manage to rub on in

humble comfort, taking the rough with the smooth. The schools are supported by a rate, and the people receive a decent education. The houses, roofs and all, as I have noticed before in other places, are mostly of deal, with widely projecting eaves, and brown with age and weather. The villages are irregular groups of these wooden boxes.

Sepey, where we stopped, and which looks as if it were built of dingy Swiss toys, is perched upon an elbow of a mountain facing down the lower valley of Les Ormonds. Its own situation is so high, that the clouds which flow up from the great Rhone Valley, beat against it like a beach. The scenery is magnificent—its principal distant feature being the Dent du Midi, a triple-peaked snowy mountain across the Rhone. Our window looked right upon it. The little inn at which we stayed was clean, comfortable, and cheap. We fared well. They gave us plenty of meat, vegetables, and fruit, and we paid for everything, lodging, lights, board and all, four francs, that is about 3*s.* 3*d.* a day each, wine included. Close by the inn was a little saw-mill driven by the village stream, which all day industriously ate up the logs cut in the pine wood above, and provided the Sepey people with timber and planks. Once I was horribly frightened; the sawyer had gone to dinner, and I, wish-



THE DENT DU MIDI.

ing to remember the mechanism of the thing, pulled it about till it started off, and, having no tree to cut, thought it would probably have sawn the place in two. However, I threw it out of gear without mischief, and considered myself free of the mill.

When we had stayed some days at Sepey, we put our traps on a vehicle more like a pair of shafts with an axle and two wheels at the front end, than anything else—a sort of centaur among sledges—and went to another mountain "pension," a little higher up. Indeed I believe Comballaz, our new resting-place, is one of the highest villages in Switzerland. This is in the upper valley of Les Ormonds. Here we found a pleasant party, and made excursions, or voyages of discovery, day after day. Our landlord, M. Roch, was the most industrious fellow in the world. He was guide, accountant, dairyman, and waiter. These Swiss are very fond of doing everything themselves; and if ever the eye of the master made the steed fat, our host's stud ought to burst. He was a wealthy man for those parts, and did a fair trade in cheeses, which are laid up in certain stores in the valley, and then fetched away by the merchant. Our table was supplied not only in this article, but almost in every other, from his own farm.

For those who wish some change of scenery and associations, and yet do not care to walk on from day to day, there are no better places than these Swiss mountain "pensions." They abound especially in the valleys which branch off from that of the Rhone, like ribs from a spine. The ordinary guide-books direct you to many; the price of living at them is much the same—from four to five francs a day—and they are all within walk of magnificent scenery, which you can reach and return from without the bustle and fashion of Chamouni, and at the same time live very comfortably. There are also several others in the neighbourhood of Château d'Oex, where I once found the magpies and bones. The only drawback to the residence in these "pensions" is the almost invariable habit of dining at one o'clock, which cuts up the day. M. Roch used to be quite cross when we stayed out till the evening, and then wanted something more substantial than tea—the principal feature of that meal being cream, and heaps of the sweet mountain strawberries. Our party consisted of several ladies and gentlemen, amongst whom were an archdeacon, a dissenting minister, and a London police magistrate. I see them now, with their coats off, and Alpine flowers in their hats and button-holes, climbing a peak, in happy ignorance of the police and convocation, or grouped

on a stone, cutting their luncheon up with their pocket-knives, and mixing snow water with a dash from their brandy-flasks.

XIII.—LES ORMONDS.

PLEASANT little Sepey, I have told you something about it; set there in the elbow or crook of the valley of Les Ormonds, off the Rhone only some two hours, but so high that the clouds break upon the hill-side, where you sit as on a great beach. Few places I can think of afford a greater diversity of walks. The road from Aigle is excellent—as good as any king's highway; it is the beginning of an enterprise abandoned some years since, and comes to a sudden end directly it has passed Sepey. This same macadamized road, however, though it does not assist travellers much, gives the residents at the village a capital flat promenade in the midst of beautiful scenery. Thus among the walks of the neighbourhood the veriest turnpike trudge may find something to his mind—with the exception of the traffic. Possibly, some day, this road, which was intended to connect the Simplon route with Thun, Interlachen, and the German cantons, by Château d'Oex, may be completed; but probably it will not. Now it leads to

nothing (if I may say so without the Sepey people misunderstanding me), the route in the direction it would have taken being little better than a horse track, on which you may occasionally meet a rude sledge, but very seldom a wheel; indeed, there are parts which no carriage could get over.

But there are plenty of walks about the place—distinct characteristic walks. Leaving the little inn and its satellite saw-mill, you may get white-footed on a dusty turnpike, or wander miles over meadows noisy with the chirp of immense grasshoppers, perpetually jumping up as if to look at the scenery, and then pitching down again head first, or in deep cool woods fringing the valley stream, or among peaks of rock shooting right up into the air. You may walk towards summer or winter, and make hay or snowballs, which you please: they are both within reach—at least, they were when I was there.

Beside the excursion up or down the valley, there are four or five hills round the place, likely enough to tempt any one who spends a week at Les Ormonds. We found a fresh walk every day. The two highest hills, the Chaussy and the Dent de Chammosaire, each between 7000 and 8000 feet above the sea (no book I can refer to gives their exact height), are quite accessible to ladies from one side, and yet present difficulty enough even to

experienced climbers, from another. Without professing to be the latter, I made two or three abortive attempts on the Chaussy, before I succeeded in effecting a directly short cut, where I came to bits which Blondin would have enjoyed. The ascent was perfectly easy, had I not been trying to establish a new path to the summit, which we thought we had made out with our telescopes. It is disagreeable, however, climbing alone; a slight accident might disable you, and then you would be, probably without a chance of seeing any one, or making yourself heard for days. I remember, though, finding company up one of the mountains which would not have helped me much to correct a mishap. I was climbing a steep slope, now and then with hands as well as feet, when a big stone came hopping down by my side, with bounds which would have brained Polyphemus. Looking up, I discovered, peeping out to see the effect, a small boy, who had not indeed thrown, but loosened it at me. He was stationed up there to look after some goats, and I suppose found it dull. I hollaed at him, and made a great spurt, as though I would be there in a minute and eat him up. He hid, while I, thinking he might reconsider his advantage and defend himself, scrambled aside out of the line of fire as fast as I could, and did the same.

But about the walks. Let me recommend any one who may read this, and visit Sepey, to ascend the Tour de Mayen, the Chaussy, and the Dent de Chammosaire. This last was the first I climbed. With a pony for E., who could not walk, and the prog, with beer of the country—not bad, though weak, we started directly after breakfast, and, descending the valley, which lay between us and the mountain, took the path to Forclaz; this led us in about twenty minutes to an old picturesque bridge, which spanned the rocky channel of the valley stream at some height. Past the bridge, we worked up a series of steep zigzags for some three-quarters of an hour, till we reached the village. Forclaz is a hamlet of Sepey, having no church of its own. It is a small straggling place, consisting of the usual brown wooden chalets. Here we spared our commissariat, and got some drink at one of them. It was indeed the inn or public-house, but had no sign or notice to that effect. The fact is, every one knew who kept the brandy and wine; nobody ever called except the villagers of the place. There are no travellers in Forclaz; the people, many of them at least, turned out to stare very civilly at us, and we asked them to point out the hospitable house. We knocked, were admitted, and went upstairs into a very ill-ventilated wooden apartment, ornamented with

portraits of Lord Raglan and other Crimean heroes, and smelling of bad cheese. The Swiss never open their windows; hence, however exhilarating the air may be outside their doors, within it is often intolerable. I don't wonder at the yellow sickly look which some of the people have. Well, we went in and had some very thin white wine out of small rough tumblers, which, when emptied into the mouth, got their rims in the way of our noses. For this, our simple host had wit enough to charge as if he had supplied us with the best. Thus refreshed, we pushed on up a long reach of ill-paved, ill-natured path, towards the foot of the upper mountain. Here we halted; on our right, a high ridge, edged with stunted firs, which looked like bristles on the spine of a hog's back, seemed to promise the shortest route to the top; but it was too steep for a horse; so E. and the guide took a path which wound up in zigzags on our left, and I started off alone, arranging to meet my companion and the luncheon at the highest point. The hog's back, however, seemed to retire as I climbed, while the sun came down plump on mine. It was desperately hot. Presently I had to creep up carefully on all-fours and became aware of great numbers of mountain strawberries, growing deep in the grass, and which I could eat without fingering, like a sheep. When I had crawled about three

quarters of an hour, I came to a low cliff with a track sloping up along its face. Following this, I presently heard a young voice singing, and arrived at a pair of legs hanging over the edge. They belonged to a little cowherd, who told me he sat there all day alone, looking after his uncle's cattle. There was flatter ground above, rich and sweet grass, where cows could stand and graze.

"Would I have some milk?" "Yes, my boy, and gladly too." So he took me into a small chalet perched up here, and, putting a wooden bowl into my thirsty hand, bade me help myself out of a tub, waiting outside himself till I had done. Then I pushed on, surmounting two or three lower eminences till I reached the top. It was very cold: a patch of snow still remained close by. I sat down in a little hole dug at the extreme top, just at the edge of a sheer precipice, lit my pipe with a Vesuvian I had bought in Oxford Street, and threw the match down into space. There was a flight of choughs screaming far below, and I could see the dusty main road from Aigle, like a thin white streak in the valley.

It was a glorious day, and half Switzerland seemed to show itself. There was only one light cloud visible, and that lay upon the summit of Mont Blanc.

One side of the mountain I was on sloped down

with so gradual a descent, that I watched it with much interest, hoping to discern the distant figures of my companion and guide, who had the luncheon; but though I waited a long time, not a speck could I see. They must come up that way, so I went down to meet them. I was now descending a sloping shoulder of the mountain, skirted on my left by a cliff covered with shrubs. Looking over this, when I had got some way, I made out far below two moving dots, one white. Now, as E. had a straw hat and white jacket on, I concluded this was the luncheon—an awful way off. The worst of it was, they stopped close to some chalets, as if, which turned out to be the case, they could not make out the path. Presently some more dots came out of a chalet, and one, which I took to be a native, consulted with them and set off. In about half an hour I had lost sight of the dot, when it suddenly appeared above the cliff, first the head, then the shoulders, then the very tattered suit of a little brown old man.

"Friend," said I advancing, "have you brought the beer?"

"No."

My comrade was much fatigued, and wished me to descend. In fact, the luncheon was below.

"Would I return by the long or short route?"

"Short," I replied; for I was cross. So he

turned round, and walked slap over the edge of the cliff. I followed, supposing it was all right; but I can assure you I was most heartily scared at seeing my new friend skipping down with an agility ill suited to his grey hairs, and expecting me to follow. However, there was no help for it; so I let myself down by the shrubs, like Jack descending the bean-stalk, and got to the bottom at last, flustered, thankful, and thirstier than ever. Making my way quickly to the two original dots, E. and the guide, I learnt that the latter had broken the beer-bottle. Conceive my selfish consternation! There was a little hot froth in the fragments. The fellow had not only spilt the precious liquid, but now confessed he did not know the way to the summit—had never been there. Hence the halt at the chalet, and the mission of the old gentleman. It turned out that the latter was employed by the goatherds in hunting for and driving home the animals which had strayed among the mountains—hence his sureness of foot and steadiness of head; but I had known the profession of the messenger, I should have thought twice before I took his suggestion to return the shortest way. Poor old man! he was so civil, attentive, and white-headed, I gave him a franc. His gratitude was immense. Of course, however, it is foolish to give people more than they expect;

by so doing, many tourists spoil the market. Prices gradually increase as you approach the parts of Switzerland which are most visited, and decrease as you leave them. We paid more daily for a little bedroom at the top of the "Hôtel des Bergues," at Geneva, than we did for board, lodging, and all the extras put together at Sepey.

Our pseudo-guide was a very grumbling fellow. One thing, however, he had a right to complain of. He had lost the way, as usual, and, going to a chalet to ask for it, a big dog rushed out, flew at his throat, which he missed, and bit him deep in the wrist. He apprehended hydrophobia, and whined miserably the rest of the way home. The cur was not mad, but simply conscientious. Left to guard his master's chalet, he could do no less than he did, after barking; but our guide was inconsolable.

We returned through a pine wood, the path winding steeply down. I hate some of those forest rocky zigzags: you are liable to have your head broken by loose stones; once started by an errant cow or passer by, they cross every turn of the path in succession. You can't see them till they bounce out of the wood, but they make a tremendous noise. There were ever so many, as big as one's head, which had pitched on the path,

some to bound off into the wood below, and go crashing down, others, to show by their fragments, and the force with which they had knocked up the dirt, how terrible a blow from one of them would be. I could not, however, resist loosening one great fellow on the edge of our path. He soon got off, and quite frightened me by the violence with which he dashed through the forest, especially when I recollected that a meadow lay a quarter of a mile beneath, with a herd of cows in it. Would he make one of them into beef? I was much relieved when, on our emerging at the bottom, I saw them all serenely grazing, and whisking their tails, intact.

This expedition to the top of the Dent de Chammosaire can be comfortably made in about eight hours, allowing some little time on the summit.

The Chaussy had better be ascended from Comballaz, the other pension I mentioned, about two hours' rough walk above Sepey; but in this case too you have to descend for some time before you begin to climb. Most people take a circuitous route, crossing the stream a mile or two higher up, and getting round to the back of the mountain. Thus you can ride to the summit. You pass a lake with a sloping shore of snow.

The view from the Chaussy is much the same as that from the Dent de Chammossaire. M. Roch,

the landlord of the inn at Comballaz, is a capital guide, and keeps horses for his guests.

The Tour de Mayen had better be ascended from Sepey. To reach it, you first mount the stream which turns the saw-mill by a path through a wood. This leads to a large fragment of rock called the Pierre de Mouelle; turning to the left there, you presently come to a waste place of rock fragments, and huge stones tumbled about, and cropping up in all directions, interspersed with patches of snow. It is difficult to find the path through this, as the rock which bounds it shows like a cliff. There is a track, however, which leads up towards the foot of the Tour. It is better to press into your service one of the cowherds. Once out of this wilderness, you must find your own road. There is the mountain, rising like a sugar-loaf; you wriggle your way up as well as you can, the last part of the climb requiring hands as well as feet. By all means wear thick gloves, or the sharp edges of the rock will cut your hands to pieces.

The top is small and flat. The day we reached it was so cloudy that we feared the view would be spoilt; but it was one of the most striking I ever saw. There were indeed clouds, but they were beneath us, and we therefore stood on a small island in the midst of them. They rolled by, a

huge heaving sea of mist, gaping here and there, so as to give us glimpses of the country like a map beneath, far below, and then uniting in a plain of cloud waves. A neighbouring rock peak stood up like a sister island, with a large solitary bird sitting on its topmost stone. It was a grandly desolate scene.

Another beautiful walk from Sepey is up the upper valley of Les Ormonds to the Plain des Isles, a horseshoe precipice of immense height, topped with glaciers from which five or six waterfalls leap. This is the termination of the valley, and is seven or eight miles from Sepey; the road lies above the banks of the stream, past l'Église, and shows many very beautiful points of interest. There is an hotel at Les Isles called the "Hotel of the Diableret," looking right upon the basin into which the streams plunge from the glaciers of that mountain. Here you can dine, and, if you please, make a more lengthened stay: many do; the inn has, however, more pretensions than our humble affairs at Sepey and Comballaz.

There is no climbing in this walk. We were much struck when we took it, at the confidence with which the chalets are left during the day. The people were all looking after their cows and grass on the higher lands, and we knocked in vain at door after door for directions on our route.

Many other excursions can be made from the valley, all within the reach of respectable walkers, and none of them pestered with prying tourists.

The people are very civil, barring my young gentleman on the slopes of the Chaussy, who bowled at me with big stones from above; but that was all in play. There are no beggars, at least I came across only one, and he did the thing so badly that it was evident he had never met with much encouragement.

I shall be glad if these slight reminiscences of the pleasant fortnight we spent in the valley of Les Ormonds should help some reader to an equally agreeable visit to the home of these simple civil folk; but I hope nobody will spoil the rustic, free and easy life the tourist may lead there now, by tempting the landlords to aim at the expensive affectations of refinement which already mar the traveller's sojourn in some more frequented parts of Switzerland.

Now, my dear readers, who have accompanied me through the first trip of the Regular Swiss Round, and then rested in one of its loveliest valleys, we must leave the granite, snow, and grass —the tinkling of the cattle-bells, and the rush of the torrents—the sunset on the white peaks, and the cloud which sails beneath our feet—the hot glare of the hill-side, and the deep gloom of the

pine forest. Our trip is over. The carpet-bag is packed, and the empty knapsack rolled up within. Weak as you may think the act, on this occasion I positively brought home my alpenstock, with which I nearly put out the left eye of a fat French gentleman who met me round a corner at a railway station; but we took off our hats at one another instead, and made things pleasant. Once at Geneva again, the return journey was soon accomplished. Express train to Paris without change of carriage—then a run of five hours to Havre—a plank, by the light of a dangling lantern, on to the packet—the gangway hauled back, with shouts in French and English—the first feel of the swell as the vessel moved slowly out of the harbour—into the berth—sound asleep in five minutes—the waking up and going on deck to distinguish the cliffs of the Isle of Wight—Southampton Water—the Custom-House—the consciousness of being understood with facility while our French companions gave fragmentary directions to the porters—the railway terminus—the corner of a carriage—London—"Here you are, sir, fust cab!" So successfully ended a most pleasant tour, without any hitch whatever. Ill and worn at starting, I came back feeling, thank God, that I had yet, beneath the rubbish which chokes those who have anxious London work, a vein of boyhood's health, though

the mine had been opened for a "good few" years; and I can only hope that I may at least have conveyed some faint impression of the scenes I enjoyed myself, to those who have never seen them, and touched not unpleasantly a few familiar reminiscences of Alpine walks, in those who are acquainted with Switzerland.

SECOND TRIP.

SECOND TRIP.

I.—LONDON TO MEYRINGEN.

THIS time I took my wife with me, and met my old friend J. in Switzerland. We arranged our route so as to take in places omitted in our first trip, especially on the southern side of the Alps. Our first destination was Meyringen, in the vale of Hasli; thence we proposed getting across to the upper part of the valley of the Rhone, and after spending a few days there, making a descent upon the Italian lakes over the Simplon, coming back by the Val Anzasca and the Monte Moro, into the great Rhone Valley. But more of these when we come to them.

We went, for shortness, by the old road, Mulhouse and Bâle. At 4.50, one hot Tuesday afternoon, in company with several returning Monsieurs and fresh-looking English tourists in new traveling-clothes, we left London Bridge Station for Folkestone Harbour. Pity the poor foreigners at

an English railway station! The civil athlete in corduroy, who pounces on their luggage, listens to their plaintive explanations with a face which says, "All right, Mossoo; we will get you out of England by the next train." But poor Mossoo is flustered and incredulous. Never mind: you will have the whip-hand of all these cockneys as soon as you get to Boulogne. While they stutter and stick fast, you will command the French cabman with native ease. And let me say that, though they do wear regulation hats, there is much more defiant audacity about French cabmen than is shown by ours. Cabby is civil enough if you are civil to him; but the privilege accorded to his foreign brother of asking for a *pourboire*, or something to drink, after every fare, always destroys the decision of a payment, and opens the door of contention directly that of the vehicle is shut.

For the present Mossoo sat in moody submission. In mental prospect were the beloved Boulevards and *cafés*, but first there was to come the sickening sea, which he hates. The air had been hot and heavy as we drove through Cheapside to the terminus; the little pennants on the masts near London Bridge were smutty and still; but as we turned off the main line down towards Folkestone Harbour, the tassels of the carriage blinds fluttered in the breeze, and the light of the evening

sun showed the plunging expectant waves. Make up your mind to see the Channel rough.

We got to Boulogne at half-past ten, and, after rescuing our luggage from some volunteers who carried it off into the darkness on a truck, reached the railway station just as the train was leaving it. The distribution of tickets had ceased, the waiting-room was empty, the passengers were seated in the carriages, their baggage was all labelled, registered, and stowed away; the porters stood in blue blouses, and attitudes of relief, upon the platform; in short, it was one minute past the hour of departure, by the station clock, when we rushed in, and got off, all right, down to the bundle of wraps and umbrellas. In such an emergency, at a foreign terminus, make straight at the train, deposit something, and speak English. This renders all polite verbal prohibitions unpromising, and, by the time the official mind would have decided on material resistance, you have got scuffling possession of tickets, are in the carriage, and past hindrance.

We got to Paris at five in the morning, and left it in two hours, after a breakfast and a wash, for Bâle, or "Bailey," as a compatriot in our carriage insisted on pronouncing it. I have met a good many helpless people in my life, but this one was curiously so. He was so afraid of being left be-

hind at the stations the train stopped at, that he dared not get out long enough to buy food, and was quite thankful when I brought him and his wife a handful of biscuits. He was very silent and dusty, but several times asked me when I thought we should get to "Bailey." I drew his attention to Bradshaw, and, showing him the time-table, said that French trains were generally punctual. After a long pause he asked whether I thought he could procure a cigar when we arrived at "Bailey." I told him that, as almost every other shop in the town appeared to be a tobacconist's, he could buy thousands. When we got there he bought *one* of the waiter at the "Trois Rois."

The next day we went straight, or at least as straight as we could, from Bâle to Meyringen. If on leaving Boulogne we caught the train quickly, we were slow indeed at Bâle, and felt ourselves fairly among foreign railways again. The omnibus from the inn drove up to the terminus about forty minutes before the train started, and it took me exactly half an hour to get our tickets. Whenever you travel by Swiss rail, you seem obliged to take Olten on the way. Having changed carriages there we got to Thun without a break, and found omnibuses ready to take us to the boat, which left at once for Neuhaus, the "port" of Interlachen. Arrived there, we got into one of the

ramshackle bell-bedecked native flys, and drove in jingling dust to the Brientz steamer, There were a good many people on board, but we dropped most of them at the Giesbach Falls, and stood across to the little town of Brientz.

We had now reached fresh ground, and yielded to the offers of the landlord of the "Bellevue," a new hotel some little way out of Brientz, to dine at his house, and then drive on to Meyringen in one of his carriages. We found a comfortable meal, a very pretty sunset view from the windows, and the attention which generally marks a rising inn. I have several times found old-established hotels presume on their reputation, especially on the Continent, where a winter comes between the experience of tourists. A man gets his name well in Murray's Handbook, keeps it there by his deserts till it appears in several successive editions, and travellers go freely to his doors. Then comes the tempting reflection, "Why not raise my prices by putting on a little more money, or cutting off a little of the entertainment I supply? People drive away from my door unable to find room. A franc a head per day, added or saved in each bill, would raise my income at the rate of 500*l.* a year." What wonder we find those guide-book worshippers, who must go to this or that bepraised inn, occasionally bled beyond endurance?

But we must be trotting on to Meyringen. It was so dusk that the chief thing which struck us in the drive was the flatness of the road. Here and there we heard our old friend the Aar, which runs down the vale of Hasli; but all we saw of Meyringen as we approached was a candle or two in the windows and the inside of the hostler's hand, who thus sheltered one to light us as we got out of our carriage into the "Hôtel du Sauvage."

Next morning we explored the place. The village is one of the most pleasing in the Oberland. It is both clean and picturesque. A clear stream which flashes through in a trough, and several fountain spouts, supply the people with plenty of water, which they use. The beauty of the place is of a kind which grows upon you. The houses are detached, but gathered mainly about a rambling street, which might have been built by a scene-painter—only he would not have done it so well. They are of wood, weather-stained, carved, galleried, and draped with vines and creepers. The whole effect on a fine day is intensely Swiss, especially if you walk down from the church towards the "Hôtel du Sauvage." At each end of the vista between the houses is a striking view of a cascade, which you might think the street was arranged to embrace. The hills around are happily broken with rock and pine,

having here and there lawn-like hollows of short turf, and varied waterfalls. Some shoot clear off overhanging shelves with a sounding plunge; others spread themselves out silently over slopes of smooth rock, showing white and thin, like lace; others tumble down in masses and broken haste.

On one side the lower hills are topped by a double range of mountains, the last bright with glacier and snow. Those on the other side divide the valley from that which leads from the Brunig to Lucerne. Looking upwards, away from Brientz, you see the commencement of the two passes of the Grimsel and the Susten. The former I had, on the first trip of the Swiss Round, descended to within a few miles of Meyringen; the other leads to Wasen on the St. Gothard Road. Still to the left of this there is another, the Joch, up which we proposed to make an excursion.

Our inn was the cleanest I ever knew in Switzerland. It was washed and scrubbed daily, with almost Dutch care. Nothing could exceed the attention of M. and Mme. Baud, the host and hostess, and the pleasant little waiter, who scudded about all day with untiring civility. The view from the back of the inn is very beautiful. You look up the gorge which leads to Rosenlaui, upon the glacier of that name, and the peaks of the

Wetterhorn. In the foreground, across the flat valley, are the falls of the Reichenbach. In staying two or three days in the valley, do not stop at this latter place; the view from it is much less striking than that from Meyringen.

We walked to the falls after strolling about the village. All the best points of approach have been taken possession of by chalets, the occupiers of which make you pay for the view. That which commands the principal fall is skirted by a hoarding so high and close that the tourist is compelled to pay the fee or lose the sight. You hear the roar of the cascade, and go up some steps into a house, the back windows of which open right upon it. Generally they are closed by shutters, which are not thrown back till the spectator is placed in his proper spot. Then the attendant flings them wide open, and you look. The suddenness of this view does perhaps add to its effect; but I don't like working my way to any grand natural sights through fees and flunkeyism. It is a good thing to climb, or wait, or in any way work hard for what you enjoy; but this fashion of making a peep-show of the sublime, at sixpence a head is offensive. They didn't actually make a charge in this particular chalet, but pointed out a book of fees on a table close by the open window. I think this is worse. I don't know anything in

THE REICHENBACH FALLS.

the world of small financial irritation more provoking than "I will leave it to you, sir." These people gave us the book, a pen, and a smile. I remember the whole process quite as distinctly as the fall itself.

This, however, is very beautiful. I know no spot where the tourist can better study the *arrowy* character of a waterfall. The stream here is considerable, and takes a fine buoyant header off a shelf of rock upon the hard stone floor of the chasm below. Of course it bursts and splashes off all round, with much noise, and flings so much spray up the sides of the basin into which it leaps, as to provide materials for a number of baby falls, which run back like young ones to their parent. These cascades make a mist so thick as to wet you through in a short time. But the most striking feature in the composition of such a fall as that of the Reichenbach is its arrowy character. It is like a sheaf of water-rockets, rushing downwards. The moment the stream leaps clear of the rock it begins to form these barbed shoots, as if it wished to pierce the stones beneath.

We lunched in the room from which the falls are shown, as the people there sell bread and wine, and then took a stroll on the other side of the valley, to the fall of the Alpbach. This is the curse of the place, as the material through which

it flows sometimes comes down with it in such abundance as to flood the village with mud. The stream rises in the high lands, brings down the soft soil of its banks, and then gets choked at the narrow cleft whence it ought always to issue into the Meyringen Valley. Meanwhile the mud accumulates above at compound speed, till there is a lake of it. Then the barrier gives way, and the people of Meyringen find themselves up to the middle in their neighbours' acres. You may like the wealth of your friend's farm to flow into your home, but not in this shape. A large stone-paved channel is now made to lead the Alpbach safe and straight into the Aar. They say it serves its purpose. At any rate it makes a fine bath for the little boys, who strip and lie down in it when the stream is low and the sun is hot.

There is a beautiful walk just above the Alpbach, up some broad zigzags, from which the scenery of the valley shows its special charms. Indeed, there are numerous varied excursions around Meyringen, which we stayed there long enough to appreciate though not to exhaust. It is the centre of six well-known roads, but there are many more used by the country people, and quite easy.

After dinner the waiter told me that the Schwing-feste, or wrestling-match between the

men of Hasli and Unterwalden, was to be held the next morning on the Engsthlen Alp, about two hours and a half above the village; so I desired him to get breakfast in good time, as I should go myself.

It was about half-past seven, however, the next morning when I walked up the zigzags beyond the Alpbach fall, in the direction indicated by the waiter. As the day was a great one for the Meyringen people, I expected to have seen many on the road; but I was late and alone. The path soon reached a table, or rather shelf of land, and then, traversing this, I mounted the hill-side beyond it. The scenery was lovely. Picturesque cottages and park-like grass, with irregular groups of large trees, lay immediately around me; in front the hills rose again, huge swells of Alp or pasturage, dotted here and there with a dark brown chalet; beneath me was the vale of Hasli, and beyond it the opposite low range, above which the snowy peaks of the Wetterhorn shone white in the sun. But they were soon all hid, for clouds came down, and though they were dry enough, shut off not only the view of the mountain, but that of the path. While it was clear I had made my way towards a summit near which I knew the gathering was to be held. Now the summit was gone, and I had got fairly into the cloud region,

with the smallest inkling of my path, and no compass. After looking and turning round several times, I had not the slightest idea which way to go. Presently I came to a cluster of chalets, but there was not a soul in or near them. At last I heard a great hollaing at a distance, and, giving chase to it, found in time that it proceeded from three rustics who were guiding some companions to their path. "Are you going to the Schwingfeste?" says I. "Yah," they replied; so I shortened sail and followed astern. Presently we emerged from the stratum of clouds upon the shoulder of a hill over which my friends told me the games were held. In a few minutes we came upon the place, a small flat plot of grass with rising turf banks on which the people of Hasli and Unterwalden respectively sat tier above tier. We found ourselves on the Hasli side. The great body of the Unterwalden people had not arrived, though their opponents were present in force. My companions greeted friends, and I, having none there, looked about me. The grass arena was surrounded, at the height of about twenty feet up the bank, by a fringe of wine-casks under umbrellas. They had been brought up on men's shoulders, and were thus shaded from the sun. The arena itself was occupied by three or four couples, who danced upon the green. A thin sprinkling of Unter-

walden people sat on the opposite bank, every now and then looking up the range of grass-hills behind them, over the ridge of which they expected to see their friends and champions approach. Presently they came almost all together, and charged down the slope with a chorus of ululation. It was a defiant war-cry, and I could hear strife in the sound. The friends of the rival wrestlers soon settled themselves down on their respective banks, and the umpires cleared the arena; the last to move off it being some pigs, which snouted away and flicked their tails in total unconcern of the whole matter. The pigs belonged to a solitary chalet which stood some hundred yards off, and which was made, for the day, into a public-house.

There was no Englishman present but myself. The whole affair was a genuine one, and quite unlike some which are occasionally got up for show in places where tourists resort. The chatter of the crowds soon ceased, and the rulers of the games brought forward the first two pair of wrestlers. They wore their ordinary shirts and trousers, but over these last they put on very strong drawers, by the waistband of which each man held his opponent. None wore any shoes. There was perfect silence when the first pair came together. Each washed his arms with white wine

shook hands, knelt down, laid hold of the waistband of his adversary before and behind, and tried to turn him on his back. It was a sullen graceless exhibition as long as the men remained thus writhing on their knees, but occasionally, when they rose to their feet, there was an exciting struggle. All was conducted with fairness and propriety. Whenever a champion was victorious his friends on the bank yelled applause: and then he went round among them with a hat, and got a heap of coppers. There was no sport but the wrestling; no races, leaping, or hurling. Pair after pair came down into the grass-plot and tugged at their respective waistbands. Some of the men were well built, and showed remarkably muscular forearms. I noticed this to a German gentleman who sat by me on the grass, and spoke English well. "Ah," said he, "that is caused by milking: when a man milks for hours every day he gets such a bundle of muscles as you see."

There was only one really fine figure among the wrestlers, and he was apparently the best man on the Unterwalden side, for they kept him to the last. The Hasli representative was a clumsy round-shouldered fellow, but with an ominously dogged look, and limbs like a cart-horse. He walked up with a straw in his mouth; and the excitement of the day rose to its highest pitch

when this pair were locked in silent grapple. Three times they hugged and spent their breath, being obliged to unclasp without an inch of gain on either side. Then the Unterwalden champion lost his temper, and, the umpires coming forward, forbade him to try again. I never saw a man in such a rage. He shook like one in a fit, and it took four of his friends to keep him down. He tried, among other things, to throw his boots at his rival—so fierce was his resentment. This closed the games, which I was glad to have seen, as they take a high place in Swiss life; but they were very dull and monotonous. The victory resulted slightly in favour of the Hasli people, who probably prized it all the more. An easily won triumph has few charms.

All day I had been hearing much from the German gentleman and two friends of his on the poorness of the play and their own skill.

They could do this and that. Bah! they would show me the way back to Meyringen without troubling the path, if I liked. "Very well," says I; and away they went, bragging, puffing, and sneering at me for being the last in the descent. As they had alpenstocks, and I had only an umbrella, it was hardly a fair race, for the alpenstock is of most use in descending steep and rough ground. However, I kept close at their heels till

within a quarter of a mile of the bottom, when they bounded down with undisguised scorn and left me. This was what I wanted. I had noticed a short cut to the inn, under a wall, from the bottom of the path. So, directly they were out of sight, I ducked down, ran to it as fast as I could, sat down on a bench outside the door, put my legs up, and lighted a cigar. In about two minutes my gentlemen came crowing round the corner, to find the stranger they had challenged and derided taking his ease. They had shown themselves so ostentatiously conceited of their prowess, that I could not resist a little quiet triumph, and said nothing about the short cut. So I sat there till they came up, and then went in to get ready for dinner.

The Swiss athletes did not give me a high idea of their powers. I had seen what I have reason to believe was an important and characteristic exhibition of them; but there was nothing like the grace and agility shown on an average English cricket-field. The men are no doubt marvellously strong. I am sure some of them could carry—say a sack of flour—for miles. They are as strong as donkeys, and can run down-hill without jarring their necks or knees. But when you have said this you have said nearly all you can in praise of their gymnastics. They are more enduring than

active, and when they climb, which is the great national pace, show, to my eye, much more of the sloth than the chamois. They plod and screw themselves on with perfect surefootedness, but seldom with any movement which is related to a bound. I except the descent of hills, where they can guide the effect of the law of gravitation upon themselves with wonderful ease.

There is a proverb here which says, "No money no Swiss." It may be doubted whether they have, as a people, any natural enterprise about their mountains, and ever took seriously to climbing them till they began to be paid by tourists for doing so. What does a goatherd care about the top of the peak? He toils after his froward charge because they bring him a living; but why should he be more adventurous than they? Why should he go where there is no grass? All at once the peasant awakes to the fact that foreign, ruddy-face, long-pursed tourists want to find their way mainly where it is least plain, and that, though they possess knapsacks, they seldom carry them themselves. Thus the crags and glaciers become fruitful, and the lad qualifies himself as a guide or porter, in places the only attraction to him of which is that some one will pay him for going there. The scenery he cares most for is a handful of money. No doubt there are a few enthusiasts

among the Swiss themselves; but you may depend upon it most of them would make their peaks into turnip-fields if they could, and change their summer snow into manure.

I was riding once by moonlight through a famous valley, when I fell into conversation with a Swiss about his native land.

"Do you live in this part of the country?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"It is very beautiful," I said.

"Ah!" he rejoined, with some show of enthusiasm, "it is indeed, monsieur; it bears excellent potatoes."

II.—MEYRINGEN TO VIESCH.

NEXT morning my wife and I started for the Brunig Pass, which may easily be crossed and recrossed in one day from Meyringen, by a moderate walker. It took us three hours to Lungern, the first village on the other side, and a little more than three back, not including halts. The Brunig is a very low pass, the summit being not more than 2000 feet above Meyringen, but it is a very beautiful one. There is nothing sublime, perhaps, in its scenery, but the whole thing is almost complete in its way. You have wood,

rock, and grass, and at each end of the route you have lake. The carriage-road is excellent, and is being made to Meyringen as well as to Brientz; this, however, is more convenient than picturesque.

We went most of the way by the old bridle-path, which is often approached by the new broad way, and indeed in some places covered by the rubbish from one of its cuttings. Poor old path! you have done your best, and led the peasant and the packhorse safely for many years, and now you are profaned by muddy, swearing navigators, and startled with the shots of blasting. Your work is done: you will be left for the moss and the fern to creep on. No careful villager, with pick and shovel, will any more fill up the ruts which the winter streams make upon your face, nor mend your brink with board and stake where the shelving soil slips down the steep hill-side. The cone from the fir-tree will lie unstirred in the middle of your track, and smart ladies and gentlemen in kid gloves, driving down the new carriage-road, will point at you and say, "See, there is the old path. How very tiresome it must have been!"

But we went by the patient old path, which wound its way up the hill-side, now round a fallen fragment of rock, now across the dry torrent-course by a pine bridge which trembled at the footfall,

now under great boughs, and ever paved with big stones when it rose more steeply than usual, thus giving a good gripe to the foot of the burdened horse. We entered the high road at the top of the pass, and walked on at once to Lungern, the first village on the other side. Here is a thing made much of in guide-books—a drained lake. Once upon a time the people of Lungern lived upon a lake; they fished and bathed, and looked at the reflection of the trees in the water. Some way off, lower in the valley, was another lake, the level of which was much below their own. What if they could tap theirs, and let it out, leaving 500 acres for them, instead of the fish! You will find all about it in Murray's Handbook. They spoilt their scenery, improved their acreage, and flooded the houses of their lower neighbours. But all has long ago been made pleasant, and the Lungern farmer carts his muck where once the evening star danced upon the waves. Heigh-ho! It was a loss to the lovers when they took their evening stroll, but a gain to the married couple when they wanted to fill the cupboard. Boys and girls think that they can live upon love and moonshine, but men and women must have mutton and coals. A fig for the scenery, cried the Lungernites; give us pork. So they tapped their lovely lake, built pig-sties, and received a longer notice in Murray's

Handbook than they ever would if they had let nature alone.

After resting at Lungern we came back again, and stopped to refresh ourselves at a new little inn on the top of the pass. The view from this up the vale of Hasli is most beautiful, and was rendered still more so just then, by a storm which swept over the scene and shifted the tints of earth and sky in lovely and quick succession. Dwellers on the flats have no idea of the picturesque capabilities of even a shower. With them it simply rains, and they think of the hay or the turnips, as the case may be. But he who stands upon a height, with wide mountain-jagged horizon, sees the rain-cloud born and die. He watches the march of the tempest, with its banners of lightning and band of thunder. He marks the waving slope of the down-pour, and catches the upper breeze, while the smoke from the chimney far beneath him rises straight up into the air.

When the weather cleared up we walked down into Meyringen, partly by a fresh path, and got in before the second *table d'hôte*, hungry and pleased.

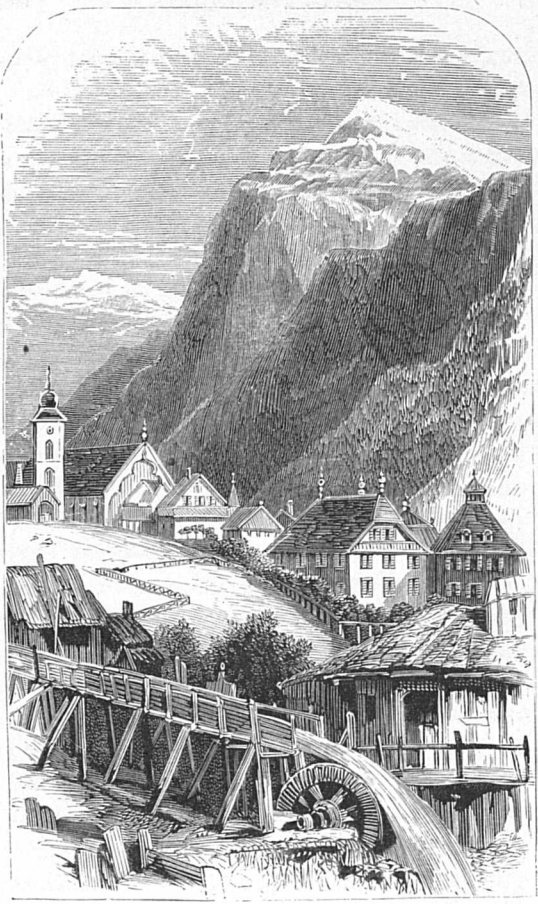
Next day was Sunday. There is a little English church close by that which belongs to the village. It has been granted by the Government to an English clergyman, who is about fitting it up in a manner suitable to our service. Shortly before

eleven the congregation dropped in by twos and threes, until there were very few visitors in Meyringen and Reichenbach unaccounted for. I must say that, on the whole, English travellers in Switzerland value the opportunities of public worship which are provided during the summer. There is a set of indolent semi-dissipated people at most of the large places, who affect an indifference to the whole matter; but the hearty *bonâ fide* tourist, who has left work and is going back to it, and who is refreshing himself during the interval with a month of the hardest work of all in the whole year, generally goes to church. On this morning in Meyringen there was a congregation of thirty-one. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, and out of the thirty-one present twenty-three remained to communicate. Most of them were young men, devout and sunburnt, from the mountains. The windows of our church were, some of them at least, so low that any one could look in. This day they were set open for the heat, and as the service at the village church was ended before ours, we had half its congregation standing by, respectfully, but staring in with all their eyes. I was placed immediately opposite the open window during the sermon, and could hardly help smiling at the number of glances I caught the moment I looked up. Ten or fifteen deep outside, there was

a bank of faces, civil and steadfast, with a strong sense of tobacco-smoke; the men having (many of them) lighted their Sunday pipe on coming out of church. The *pasteur* of the place was a very kind, pleasant man, and lent the English clergyman much that he needed for the service, besides taking care of his robes during the week.

Next morning my wife and I went off on a stroll towards the Joch Pass. The usual approach to it is through Imhoff, and then up some steep zigzags a little beyond the village of Wyler. We went, however, by a footpath across the little wooden plank which crosses the stream from the Alpbach, behind the village. Presently this mounts to the left, and skirts the shoulder of the mountain above Imhoff. We strolled on through some steep lonely meadows, the view behind us rising as we did, until the path dwindled away into a narrow ledge, which at last grew so small that my wife stuck fast, and could neither go on nor turn round to get back by herself. The mountain fell away on the right so steeply, that a slip down it would have landed one's fragments about the back doors of the people of Imhoff in less than five minutes. On the left it rose bare and abrupt, without any shrubs or growth for giddy walkers to hold on by. The path was about a foot wide; so we had really good walking-ground; but there is something spe-

cially upsetting in a steep shelving rock above and beneath you. It seems as if the little groove on the face of it could hardly carry you upright. Perpendicular rocks keep the eye steady. Here, there was not a line either vertical or horizontal to help the senses in preserving the equilibrium. The whole world appeared on the slant. The scenery was tilted up on end; and there went the little path on before us, like a gutter on the side of a high-pitched roof, Imhoff being, as it were, over the eaves, and some local peak—I forget its name—representing the chimneys. Here my wife stuck fast, and declared she could not get on. Though by no means a bad walker, on level ground, just now she could neither stir nor look down. So I persuaded her to shut her eyes entirely, and led her gingerly on till the sides of the rock above and below were less steep. The path itself was smooth and wide enough, so there was no need to watch each footstep. This is, perhaps, not a bad way of getting off a ticklish place, when you can trust your guide and the danger is purely imaginary. If the road is wide enough for your feet, but your heart sinks at the sight of a church spire a thousand feet or so under your elbow, shut off the offending view by closing your eyes, lay hold of a steady friend by the coat-tail, and be towed, under half-steam, into a flatter place. It does not



THE TIFLIS.

read like safe advice now I have written it down, but it has answered at least in one instance.

We came out at the top of the zigzags above Wyler, and then for some two hours walked up the sloping pastures of the Engsthlen Alp, on one side or the other of the central valley stream. Behind us was a glorious view of part of the Bernese Oberland, the peaks of the Wetterhorn being the nearest and most conspicuous. We sat down and looked at this again and again, until at last we found it was too late to get back to Meyringen by daylight. There was nothing for it but to go on to the little inn on the Joch, which we found quite full. However, the landlord gave us a bed in one of the chalets, over a cow-shed, and some clean linen of his own. The bedroom, which opened slap out into the starlight, and indeed was the whole house, had a rough wooden fastening to its door, like that of a clumsy field-gate, and was reached by a sort of loft-ladder. It was, however, welcome enough, and we had a pleasant chat with the party of people who filled the little inn, several of whom had been up the Titlis that day. This, though something short of 11,000 feet in height, commands superb views, being at the end of the great chain of snow mountains. As we were so near it, I determined to make the ascent the next morning, if the weather should be fine and the

landlord could provide me with a guide. "Oh, by all means," said he: "I have an excellent guide. He shall be prepared, and call you at two to-morrow morning." This sent me off to the cow-shed at once, to get as much sleep as I could summon. It was necessary to stir betimes, in order to traverse the snow before the sun had power upon it. Besides, as I wanted to get down to Meyringen after ascending the Titlis, which latter business generally consumes some nine or ten hours, an early start was good economy of the day.

I woke a few minutes before two, and looked out. The stars were bright on a black-looking sky, and the air frosty. All promised well; so it seemed to my guide, whose lantern I saw bobbing along from the little inn towards the chalet, in order to wake me. I was soon in the inn parlour, scalding my throat with early coffee, and waking up my digestive functions with the present of a breakfast at that unusual hour. In this case it is best to take very little at starting, but make a good meal when the appetite has fairly skaken off its sleep. I don't wonder at a man's belongings showing a dislike to a heavy descent of food at two A.M., especially if they are tramped off up a mountain directly afterwards.

As soon as I had swallowed a few mouthfuls,

my guide showed himself ready to start, with a great display of rope, ice-axe, and provisions, which make the inexperienced tourist exaggerate the difficulties to be encountered in ascendiug the Titlis. Really, there are none. You have to be careful about some three or four crevasses, and are most probably very hungry before you get back; therefore victuals and a rope are advisable.

Between two and three we set off, my guide affecting to show the way with a lantern dangling at his knees. Our path lay for some time up towards the summit of the pass, across rough slopes of stony pasture, in which we occasionally stumbled on a cow, munching in the starlight, and shedding out the smell of her sweet breath. Leaving a largish lake on our right, we soon reached the notch in the ridge over which the path leads down towards Engelberg. This is the top of the Joch. Here we turned off to the right, some time apparently losing ground by descending, but always making our way towards the Titlis. Presently the gray light of the morning made that of the lantern a little, hot, greasy dab of flame; so the guide blew the candle out, hid it under some stones, of which he took the bearings, and pushed briskly on. After a succession of rock slopes of *débris*, grass, and small patch of bastard glacier, we came to a saddle, which led away from

our right towards the great rounded snow summit of the mountain. Here my man swung off his knapsack, and sat down with a look about his mouth which said, "Lunch." It was really between five and six in the morning. Sleepy housemaids of the world beneath had not yet begun to light the kitchen fire; muddy boots stood in empty attitudes of expectation at hotel bedroom doors; Belgravia was still snoring politely—when my man unstrapped his knapsack and dragged forth our lunch. This done, we passed up the edge of the ridge on our right, tied ourselves together, got down upon the snow from some rocks, and made straight for the summit, which we reached at ten minutes to seven. The view was magnificent. Towards the Bernese Oberland the air was clear: beneath us, over the Lake of Lucerne, lay a sea of cloud, out of which Pilatus and the Righi rose like islands. Beyond, the more level land lay towards Strasburg, from which it is said the summit on which we were standing is sometimes visible. It consists of a grand swell of *nevé* or frozen snow, approached on one side by snow slopes, and on the other flanked by a series of precipices down which avalanches continually fall during the day, starting from the great cake of ice then beneath our feet. There is a little bit of rock on the summit; here I sat down and looked

around. I had not done so long before I was disturbed by a poet, of all people in the world. "The poet of Engelberg" had chosen that very morning to ascend with a sheet of paper, a pencil, and six friends. One of these informed me, directly he was cast loose from the rope which had bound his party together, that the poet had come, and pointed out the man. Poor fellow! he had a character for inspiration to keep up, and so, though he was very hot and blown, he whipped out his pencil and justified it at once, soon gathering his admirers about him, and reading aloud, with rounded mouth, a stanza of the new-born thought. Then they said, "Bravo!" He pocketed the scrap, and all sat bown to lunch. It was a touch-and-go act of poetry—genius with a hair-trigger. The sense of the sublime was summoned and dismissed at will. In the space of ten minutes the view was taken in, the brain was fired, the flash was fixed in a pocket-book, and the poet had his mouth full of cold sausage.

I was so upset by these unexpected literary gymnastics, as to be diverted from the scenery for some time. However, I recovered myself, enjoyed the grandeur of the panorama for an hour, and got back to the inn on the Joch by twenty minutes past eleven. I should have returned sooner, but my man, having brought far more provision than

was needed, insisted on stopping several times, apparently with the sole object of consuming it. Guides have wonderful capacity. This one ate, and ate, and ate again, the whole way back. When we were about a quarter of an hour off from the inn, on our return, he finished the last mouthful of his store, and set up a salute of announcing howls, as if to show that he had come back unchoked. But he was a good-humoured, sturdy fellow, though greedy. I found my wife at breakfast, so I joined her in that meal, and we both set off to Meyringen at half-past twelve. We passed through Wyler and Imhoff on our return, and got to the "Hôtel du Sauvage," after several pauses to rest and look about us, between five and six in the evening. I forgot to mention a singular spring or fountain by the side of the road up the Joch. It leaps out of the face of the rock, exactly as the stream in the desert is represented in some pictures. The water bursts forth, not only in full and clear jets, but in such abundance as to make at once a considerable stream directly it reaches the ground.

The expedition to the Joch is one which I would recommend strongly to all those who spend a few days at Meyringen. The scenery is striking and distinctive; and the landlord of the little inn near the summit is pleased when he makes his guests

comfortable. He holds, indeed, some office in Meyringen—that of public notary, I think—and is a colonel in the Swiss army. This may sound strange to us but it is true, and illustrates a vein of common sense which characterizes the Swiss. This officer, wishing to change his residence during the summer, and, I suppose, not being prepared to set up a second establishment entirely out of his own pocket, makes the inn pay its own expenses, and provides himself with the country-house he desires. He converses pleasantly with his guests, and manages to show that in some respects he is not the professional innkeeper. The view from his house is very fine, and several interesting excursions, besides the ascent of Titlis, are made from it. There was a very pleasant party there when we paid our visit—two Cambridge undergraduates, a German professor, who spoke English with a grammatical conscientiousness almost painful, an English M.P., and a clever Scotch gentleman, who was quietly at home in all we talked about, and would have walked his younger fellow-tourists off their legs. The landlord chatted with us all, and lent me a Swiss shirt, of which the gills were like blinkers in size and tin in consistence. Swiss starch, when you get it, is marvellously hard.

On Wednesday we set off towards the Aeggis-

chorn, traversing on our way to it part of our old route from the Grimsel. Then we had walked to Rosenlaui without descending into Meyringen; now, therefore, as we started from the latter place and went up to the Grimsel, the scenery before us was nearly changed. The walk is only about eighteen miles, and quite easy all the way, though it leads through rough and grand scenery. You may break the walk either at Gutannen or Handek, at which latter spot there is now an accommodating chalet, with three or four beds and decent food.

Having my wife with me, you may suppose there was some luggage. This, however, went well on a horse. Let me tell you that a portmanteau and two good-sized carpet-bags travel capitally thus. This load admits, too, of several small additions, which are cumbersome to carry, but tuck in easily among the larger articles. With a horse for our baggage, one for my wife, and another for myself, we strolled leisurely off from the hotel door, about eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning. The sun was hot and the horses were slow. We went deliberately towards Imhof, over the great mound which here dams the valley of Hasli, but which is crossed by an excellent carriage-road. There is a curious cave, by the way, in which you can see the river underground, a short distance off this path.

The whole thing was, in a sense, new to me; for this was the first time I had ever ridden in Switzerland; and, unless some very special reason should compel me, I hope it will be the last. Even where the path is not steep, it is generally so rough that horses and mules never move out of a walk; the monotony of the pace is not broken by a trot or gallop. This is very wearisome. The same muscles are employed throughout the day. It is simply a moving on with your knees wide apart. You get astride in the morning, and remain so till night. When I got off my horse I thought I should never have brought my legs together again; I walked into the inn quite bandy, and must have measured some six inches less than usual.

This makes Swiss riding unpleasant, whether it be dangerous or not. On the latter head I have a decided opinion,—viz., that accidents are far more likely to befall those that ride throughout a bridle-pass than those that walk. A horse in attendance, however, is another "pair of shoes," and adds materially to the enjoyment of some excursions.

I never tried a *chaise à porteur;* but, if the bearers keep step, the motion cannot be unpleasant. Still, the consciousness of easy progress must be marred by the sight of men toiling close to you, unless you have the soul of a slave-driver. No doubt they are paid their own price, and are

glad of the job; but I had rather make a horse pant for my convenience than a man. Besides, the charm and sweetness of the mountain air must be endangered by the immediate proximity of four perspiring porters, one at each point of the compass.

The ride to the Grimsel is very beautiful. It lies at first through gorges, with the Aar rushing beneath your feet, then you creep up out of vegetation into a winding stony valley, in which the tints of the rocks are remarkable for their variety and beauty. Thus you have a combination of ruggedness and delicacy in the same material. To me there is something deceptive in this. You must meddle with these crags in order to know their real character. They will break your neck, and then smile in the sunset over your remains, with the rosiest and softest unconcern.

There are several very picturesque bridges in the wilder part of the ascent, similar to the old Devil's Bridge on the St. Gothard, only much smaller.

When we had reached the region of stones, the clouds had gathered, and some smart drops of rain sent us into the Grimsel hospice at a quickened pace. The night was closing in fast when we arrived; for we had spent some time on our way at the Handek Falls, which my wife had never

seen, and which, wonderful to say, we were permitted to visit without the company of two or three children, seeking for halfpence as volunteer guides.

From the Grimsel it is an easy day's walk to Viesch, a village in the upper valley of the Rhone, at the foot of the Aeggischorn. When you get to the top of the Grimsel Pass, there are two paths; one leads down to the Rhone Glacier, the other to Obergesteln, from which the road goes to Brieg, past Viesch. The view is not very grand when once you have topped the Grimsel Pass, but you get over your ground, and, if the weather is fine, have the Weisshorn, with its lovely snows, before you nearly all the way.

It was dusk when we got into Viesch, and the landlord of the inn had some difficulty in disposing of us, as the beds are either three in a room, or the third is put into a little apartment which can be reached only through the larger one. Hence the landlord scratches his head incessantly during the season, in thinking how to arrange married couples and bachelor tourists who want to get up at different times. An acquaintance of mine I met there was lodged with his wife in a little room, which they thought they had to themselves, when lo! next morning, while they were in mid-toilette, a full-dressed Russian gent made his appearance, apparently out of the cupboard.

III.—VIESCH TO THE AEGGISCHORN AND BEL ALP.

WHEN we got up and looked about us, Viesch revealed itself as a picturesque place, put together with natural defiance of straight lines and architectural effect. It is speaking generally, built of brown deal. The houses, thoroughly Swiss, are clustered on the river's bank around a church spire, and the people seem to thrive. Indeed, the Upper Valley of the Rhone presents a remarkable contrast to the Lower in this respect. There you have malaria and an incessant struggle with a poor soil. Fens and fogs, goitres and idiots, mark the central part of the miserable Valais. Here the ground is higher, the intellect and the atmosphere are clearer, and the crops cheerful. The country is thickly studded with brown deal villages, which the inhabitants keep tolerably clean.

Our inn was a simple, rustic affair much praised in the guide-book, and, with the exception of the sleeping arrangements, comfortable enough. The perplexed landlord, who is, I believe, a potentate in the place, wore still a ludicrously puzzled look, and his hair was tumbled quite early in the morning, as if he always managed his brains by pulling his head about, and did his thinking from the out-

side. The result showed itself in several curious ways: one was the bill. This was quite independent of the things supplied, but, being a fair sketch of what we were likely to have wanted, came to the conventional price.

Having sent the horse-load of luggage to Brieg, we engaged a man to carry our light traps for us, and set off in good time to the Aeggischorn. The path up this from Viesch is excellent. It has been made mainly by M. Wellig, the landlord of the "Jungfrau Hotel," to which we were going. He is altogether the most enterprising, thoughtful man I ever met among Swiss innkeepers. Many of them are too close-fisted and eager for money to deserve it; they don't invest profitably. Now Herr Wellig, I presume, is moved by no particular concern for the comforts of English travellers, but he knows what will pay, and therefore he is attentive and considerate. I have heard people blame him (he is a public character in Switzerland) for extreme civility. and complain that he means nothing by his bows and expressions of concern. Dolts! do you expect he can get up a real affection for you in your flying visit? Why not be thankful for civility and attention, though the man who shows it may not care two pins whether or not you are starved in the next inn? I confess I like a very attentive landlord, if he is not downright

servile, and that Herr Wellig certainly is not. I like to have an interest shown in me and my doings and my portmanteau, though I know it is all affected. I like polite affectation, when it is not accompannied by exorbitant charges. Rough honesty may be a very fine thing in print; but give me civil honesty when I enter an inn hungry and tired. Give me a man who skips about and makes himself pleasant and sympathetic at once.

Symptoms of Her Wellig's concern for his coming guests are seen directly you begin to mount the Aeggischorn from Viesch. There are many paths, but most of them are cheese-slides from the upper dairy pastures, *i. e.* slides down which the cheeses are sent in sledges. These are often very steep. Wellig's path, however, is carried carefully up by well-graduated zigzags, and kept in good walking order. It soon enters large pine-woods, from between the dark green branches of which you catch distant views of snow; then it issues on what I may call a series of terraced pastures. Directly we got out of the wood to the lowest of these, we came upon a scrubby little patch of chalets, apparently deserted; these are the last buildings on your way to the "Jungfrau Hötel." Far above this dingy battered pack of habitations you can get pale ale, hot water (really hot, a rare thing in Switzerland), bells that ring, books, and capital

cookery; and though you may toil up alone, hot and dusty, with your knapsack on your back, Herr Wellig will, I am sure, greet you as smillingly as if you came in a coach-and-four, if such a mode of approach were practicable. You see the square white hotel from the little cluster of chalets, and wind slowly up the rough terraces to the platform on which it stands, some seven thousand feet above the sea. My wife walked up, and, though rather tired, was so charmed with the rising beauties of the scenery and the freshness of the air, that, as soon as we had had our lunch—a slice of bread and cheese, with a glass of beer—we set off to walk to the top of the mountain that same afternoon. It is about two thousand feet above the inn; but there is a good path, and anybody can go without a guide, unless, perhaps, it be for the last quarter of an honr, when some ladies need a helping hand. This end of the walk is rather a scramble, as the top of the Aeggischorn consists of a pile of rock fragments heaped upon one another, as if they had been shot out of some Titan's sack. As we rose, the view of the mountains behind us, which divided Switzerland from Italy, spread itself out. When we stopped and looked round on our right appeared the Weisshorn, one of the most purely snow-peaked of the giants, since its top is a little point of snow, no bigger, so they

say, than the end of a sugar-loaf set in a grocer's window. Then came the Mischaebelhorner, or Saas Grat, with its pointed Dom and flat Alphabel; the Matterhorn, standing alone in stony triumph above the panting Alpine Club; the Fletschorn, Monte Leone, with its long, straight back of snow, along which the boundary line between the two countries lies, but which cannot be exactly trodden; the etc. etc., peak after peak, up to the Ober Aarhorn, with its pure white slopes. Were there no other view, this would repay the ascent of the Aeggischorn; but over its ridge, on the other side, lies the great reservoir of ice, which is bordered by the famous mountains of the Bernese Oberland. All Swiss tourists—the idlers and the gamblers who travel for luxurious pleasure or evil gain—know the look of the Jungfrau, the Mönch, the Eiger, and the Wetterhorn. Behind these, as seen from the valleys of indolence about Interlachen, lies a mighty reservoir of ice, which squeezes itself down most conspicuously in the two glaciers of Grindelwald. These are among the leaks and overflowings from the main central frozen sea. Now the Aeggischorn gives you a view upon this, behind the scenes, and it is for this that it has become famous.

Nothing, however, of this gaze into the snow kingdom betrayed itself as we ascended, beyond

the tips of one or two higher mountains in and about it, which showed over the range on which we stood. But when the head and shoulders of the climber surmount the highest fragments of rock, the whole marvel of the view reveals itself at once. About two thousand feet beneath you winds a frozen river from one to four miles wide, and nearly twenty long. Around it stands a circling guard of mountains, in the centre of which stands the giant Aletschorn—about which more presently—into it descend tributary glaciers, which mingle their frozen waves with the great tide of ice. It was a perfect day when we first looked down upon this scene. Every crag and slope of snow stood still in the autumn sunshine. A panorama of ice and peaks lay around us, taking in objects which would make its diameter three hundred miles in length. There was not a sound in earth or sky, but the faint fairy tolling of a church bell in a village so far beneath us in the valley we had left that it looked like a tiny toy model upon the ground. It was one of those perfect moments of view which would redeem the fogs of a whole tour.

"Now, then, sir," said a cheery voice close to us, "I'll be showman." A fat tourist, with a large gold watch-chain, map, spy-glass, and red face, was sitting over the nearest stone, and thus humbled

my romance. "Oh, my dear sir, you are very kind. I have half a mind to pitch you down-hill." I didn't say this, of course, for he was really a good fellow; so, thanking him, and clambering over a rock fragment at the edge of the summit, I seated myself where I thought he couldn't get at me. Then, having blocked his first ball, I sat down, lit my pipe, and took it all in. I never enjoyed a view more. The long winding ice-river below us was the great Aletsch Glacier, which streamed down from the neck of the Jungfrau, and, surging up against the mountain on which we stood, swept away to our left, and was lost sight of in a ravine about four hours' walk off.

But Herr Wellig dined at six, and it was now nearly five o'clock. Reader, you may enjoy the grandeur of wild solitude with keenest hunger of the mind, but you must have mutton. No man can think well, or write well, or see well, without vulgar meat and drink. The brain of the poet is made of the beef, cheese, toast, eggs, gravy, and pickles which he is fortunate enough to command and assimilate. Thought is brought to the birth by butchers' shops and coal-barges. Cut off Homer's victuals, and where would have been the 'Iliad?' So we looked round us with parting eyes, and went down to dinner.

Among other dishes we had a marmot. It is supposed to resemble sucking-pig in appearance, but its flavour is quite distinct. A gentleman present said it looked like a baby, and tasted like a musk-rat. These animals abound on some of the mountains, where they burrow in large numbers, and are shot by the peasants as great delicacies. They are killed thus: a man with his gun walks towards the colony, which is generally at the top of a hill. When he comes in sight the marmots look up, and run together to see what it is. He takes his coat off, props it up on a stick, slinks away behind it, and gets over the hill crest by a long or hidden circuit. Meanwhile, the news goes about among the marmots of this strange apparition which came moving up, and now stands still. Old and young turn out to look at it, and murmur conjectures. Meanwhile the pot-hunter crawls up to the ridge on the other side, and, taking deliberate aim, fires into the speculating multitude from the rear. Bang! Away scamper the survivors, while he pockets the corpses of the inquisitive slain, and recovers his perplexing coat.

Among the guests at dinner was a gentleman with a cynical face and a great belief in Norwegian scenery. We had no sooner sat down, and begun to ply our knives and forks, than he commenced a comparison between the mountains of Norway

and Switzerland, to the extreme discredit of the latter. "They had no shape," he said. "No shape?" said a man opposite to him, stopping in full progress a piece of meat towards his mouth, and holding it with remonstrative surprise in mid air. Then the two went into action, and a pretty skirmish we had. The Norwegian was beaten hollow. It wouldn't do to let such heresy be uttered on such a spot. We all set upon him till he was dumb. Such is the enthusiasm of admiration for Swiss scenery as to show itself prompt and jealous when no other object but that of dinner is likely to engage a parcel of hungry travellers. We all paused to resent an insult to the mountains around us, though we were strangers to each other, and he had simply said what he thought.

These *table d'hôte* dinners in the mountain inns are often very entertaining. The natural reserve of Englishmen gives way when you dine together in your shooting-jackets and slippers at some high and lonely spot. We had very merry meals at the Aeggischorn. There were about a dozen of us, though the house will contain many more, and among them one with a laugh so dancing and contagious, that he alone had need to be touched in order to set the table in good humour with itself. We talked about a Swiss Alpine Club, which it seems is more or less of a failure, having

arisen rather as a set-off against the shame of being explored by foreigners than from a real spirit of native enterprise. A Swiss himself who was present laughed at them. "Their legs are long enough," he said, "but their purses are too short." Here he hit the nail upon the head. Travelling in the high Alps costs money. Enterprise comes expensive in Switzerland. No man, however clear of head and strong of limb, can climb peaks alone in safety. He may be able to walk for a week without stopping, but no individual prowess will protect you from the concealed crevasses in the upper snows. They must be crossed by a party roped together. The best mountaineer is liable to break through a snow bridge and pop out of sight in a moment. Unless tied to his companions, down he must go.

This makes guides essential and expensive: you can't climb well without them. So-called independent ascents have all been made by a party of friends—unless you except a very few rare and unwise feats, such as the ascent of Monte Rosa by a solitary man. Hence, a long purse is one of the aspiring mountaineer's necessities. "Give me," said one of our party, "money enough, and I will go up every possible mountain in Switzerland. I would write beforehand to all the guides to meet me, say at Geneva, and engage them for the

season. I would put them into uniform, with cocked hats. I would march up the great Aletsch glacier with a brass band, and be carried to the top of Mont Blanc in a stuffed chair. I would do every great ascent of the season, and leave the proud climbing world guideless below. Had I the money," he continued, "I would blast a hole into the middle of the Matterhorn, and set masons to cut me an internal staircase. I would have this protected by mahogany banisters, and laid with Brussels carpet. Footmen in rich liveries should wait at the landing-places with refreshments while I went up. When my spiral staircase came out at the top, I would have a weather-proof room built with plate-glass windows, and look at the view from the summit as I lay upon a sofa." There was a grain of sense in all this rattle: a posse of guides could take a cripple almost everywhere; but with none the very president of the Alpine Club himself would be sorely at a loss. I believe that most young men could do the great Alpine feats, if they could afford the necessary outlay in porters and guides.

The hotel on the Aeggischorn has become the chief starting-place for the ascent of the Jungfrau, Mönch, Eiger, etc., which the tourist admires from the neighbourhood of Interlachen. Beside these familiar mountains, there are several others of

equal or greater height, which belong to the same cluster, but are not seen from the surrounding valleys. The chief and centre of these less known peaks, however, asserts its place to the spectator who stands on the top of the Aeggischorn. He sees the great reservoir of ice bordered on the other side by the well known mountains above Grindelwald, and in the midst of it a fine peak, which really overtops them all, with the solitary exception of the Finster Aarhorn. This central peak, to which I have already referred, is called the Aletschorn, and appears the highest in the Bernese Oberland, when it is approached from the valley of the Rhone. Indeed, it looks like the king of the whole family; and when I had seen it for the first time from the top of the Aeggischorn, I felt an additional respect for the giant, who had not made a show of himself for years at the edge of the icefield, like, for example, the Wetterhorn and Mönch. Bigger and higher than they, he stayed at home, indifferent to guide-books, and unmolested by mountaineers.

The Aletschorn was not ascended till 1859. Probably, it will never be a great favourite with climbers, as it does not give, like the Jungfrau, a plunge to the eye sheer down into the tourist-haunted valleys of the Oberland, nor like Monte Rosa, an unimpeded view over Italy.

One day, while we were staying at the inn on the Aeggischorn, and were full of admiration at this modest but giant central mountain, two gentlemen arrived for the purpose of ascending it, and kindly asked me to go with them. I had never climbed any of these high peaks, and was therefore glad to go, although, as it turned out, we were none of us destined to set foot upon the head of the Aletschorn this time. We were to start in the afternoon, get to a certain cave above the glacier by nightfall, sleep there, and make the ascent the next morning. Thus at least we should have had the, to me, novel sensation of a night among the glaciers.

There were six of us; the two men who asked me to accompany them, and whom I will call F. and R.; two guides—Walters, who had assisted Professor Tyndall in his famous but unsuccessfull assault upon the Matterhorn; and Stückül, which is the way, I believe, he spells his name, though he seems to have an unfair share of dots; a porter, and myself. First, though, there was the prog to be looked after. These expeditions consume a vast amount of food. Mr. Wellig packed up for us a leg of mutton, a quantity of ham, great lumps of cheese and butter, loaves, chocolate, six or seven bottles of red wine, three small ones of champagne, to be drunk on the top of the peak;

coffee, with a large open pan to boil it in; wood for the fire, cold tea, prunes, a huge block of sugar, and a number of hard boiled eggs. We had besides five blankets, three mackintoshes, and extra clothing; great worsted mits or knitted gloves, without fingers, lined with wool; spare flannel-shirts, stockings, and wraps. As, moreover, the guides carried a couple of ropes, two ice-axes, a lantern, and spare candles, we, or rather they, were well loaded when we turned out of the inn about two o'clock in the afternoon, and, with the good wishes of the remainder of the party staying there, set our faces towards our work.

Before we could reach the ice, we had the range of the Aeggischorn itself to cross. This is the great drawback to the situation of the hotel. Though seven thousand feet above the sea, you have about fifteen hundred or two thousand feet to climb and descend before you can begin or finish expeditions in the icefield. This is provoking, especially at the tail of a long day's work. In fact, the hotel, intended and adapted as it is for facilitating ascents of the Bernese Oberland peaks, has a threshold about the height of the Cheviot Hills, or Plinlimmon, only a good deal steeper, which much be crossed at the beginning and end of every excursion.

We set off, and in due time gained the top of

the range. I have already described the view. We were behind the scenes of the Bernese Oberland, and looked down into the heart of the snow-kingdom at the back of the Jungfrau. Some two thousand feet below us, the great Aletsch glacier swept by, a huge frozen river; immediately opposite, entering this last as a tributary, the little Aletsch glacier—though little only by comparison—came down from the snows of the Aletschorn. Our path lay across the great channel of ice, and up this tributary. At its higher end, it appeared much broken, and showed like a crowd of ice-cliffs looking over each others shoulders; above the hindmost lay slopes of snow to the col of the Aletschorn, from which a long white frozen ridge led towards the summit of the mountain.

Up the little Aletsch glacier, and just below its steepest and broken part, there is, in the rocks on the right hand, a small cave; this was our destination for the day, and lodging-place for the night. It goes by the name of the Hotel Bennen, that being the name of the guide (the best in the Valais) who discovered it, and was killed in an avalanche early in the season of 1864. We paused for a few minutes on the crest of the range, looking over the great tide of ice beneath us, and then scrambled down the rocks to the glacier. Walters hopped away like an India-rubber ball. I never

saw a tighter, surer-footed fellow in my life. His thigh was like a leg of mutton. Off he went, tripping down the steep descent, which consists of huge, loose, broken masses of rock, as if they formed a common staircase. They give, however, good hold to the foot, and we were soon at the bottom. There we halted for five minutes, and then set out across the glacier. This was easy walking enough; indeed, some parts of this great glacier are as safe as the Strand, and may be traversed by the most timid person. We made a short cut across it, where the surface is rather uneven. The ice has here much the appearence of a storm at sea; it rises in billows of many feet high, which seem to follow each other. The resemblance to a frozen tempest is increased by a tip of snow or white crumbling ice on the top of each wave, like a little curl of foam. But all was rigid and still. We sat down on one of these white crests, which was so hard as to knock the skin off one of my knuckles. Here and there, some in the trough, and some on the slope of the frozen waves, lay blocks of stone borne down by the glacier from the rocks which skirt its course. Masses of several tons' weight rested on this hard sea lighter than gulls upon water. During the daytime, while the sun shone, little rills trickled along the hollows of the ice in small bright blue channels, now and

then finding their way into a hole, and gurgling out of sight. Countless crevasses crossed or skirted our path, some large enough to swallow a drove of bullocks, others only a few inches wide, but all showing the same deep upright azure walls.

Walters and the other guide plodded on, however, in a business-like way, towards the right lateral moraine, where the two glaciers meet. This gave us some disagreeable walking till we got on the ice again, and proceeded towards our cave. On our way, I picked up a frozen swallow, caught, propably, in some storm, and whisked about till he died of fright and cold. When we had been walking between three and four hours, we began to look for our lodging-house. We were approaching the upper broken portion of the glacier, and knew it must be somewhere in the rocks which skirted it on our right hand. At last, Walters, pointing up, called out. "There is the hotel." The entrance looked airy, being nothing more than a jagged little hole some two hundred or three hundred feet above us in the mountain-side; so we sat down while the guides and porter went on to get the beds ready. As these consisted of sods and grass, they gathered them as they went. The hotel occurs in strata inclined at an angle of about thirty degrees to the horizon, and therefore the floor had first to be made flattish

with lumps of earth. Since it is not big, being only about twelve feet deep by eight wide, and four feet high at the most, you might think that the levelling effected by one set of visitors would serve for the next. Unluckily, however, a little stream enters the inner parlour of the premises, and runs out at the front door; thus the flooring and beds are generally washed away after each tenure. We, or rather the guides, found it so on this occasion. We watched them climb up, and crawl in head first, though we never lost sight of part of their persons, while they plugged the floor with sods, and then strewed grass upon their surface.

Presently, the room was ready, and we scrambled up; then we laid our mackintoshes on the grass, and sat down to dinner—in fact, we dined in bed. Walters produced a leg of mutton, and laying hold of the bone-end, carved it with his pocket-knife, just as you cut a stick, away from you. Stückül lit a fire and boiled the coffee in a frying-pan, filling the cave with smoke at the same time. The porter, his work now nearly done, for his business was only to carry the food and bedding to the cave, and take the latter back, lit his pipe and looked on, holding a lantern for us to see by, as it was growing dark.

It was a mixed, but merry and substantial meal. We took the food pretty nearly as it came out of

the knapsack, wine, coffee, cheese, mutton, butter, with hungry disregard of established succession. As soon as we had done, we put on extra shirts, and turned in for the night. F. lay inside, then R., then I, then Walters, The last tucked in us three, then himself, and then blew the candle out. The floor of the cave, though partially levelled, sloped outwards, and Walters lay, as it were, at the edge of the eaves. The other guide and the porter went over them, and slept somewhere else, There was no room to spare with us. We were packed so close that it was difficult to hitch an inch without waking the men on each side of you, and utterly impossible to turn round. We lay on our right sides, with our faces towards the opening of the cave, and the stars looked in. It was not cold. Walters was indeed as hard as a tree, but as warm as a stove. He went to sleep in about two minutes.

Directly over his neck, I looked down upon the glacier and the great shadow of the rock in whose side we lay, made by the moon upon the opposite snows. The little rills which had gurgled over the ice were now frozen hard. The dripping well, however, in our cave patted on throughout the night like the tick of a water-clock. Several times the glacier gave a great crack. Otherwise the silence was intense.

At first, I thought my right arm alone was going to sleep, for I had tucked it under my head, and couldn't move it without waking my companions; at last, I followed its example. Then I dreamed that I was an ancient Briton, and with several companions, met Dean Stanley, who immediately delivered a most interesting lecture upon myself and my times. I seemed to have lived in caves from my birth, but the doctor knew ever so much more about us than we did ourselves. I confess I was surprised, but gratified.

Walters awoke us by firing a lucifer-match to look at his watch; it was just one. We had turned in about seven, and had to get up by two. "Encore un moment," said he, and almost the next breath out of his mouth was the long respiration of deep sleep.

In about half an hour he woke again and called us. We couldn't get up, for the cave wouldn't let us, so we shook ourselves, rubbed our eyes, and got down over the eaves into the night. First, however, we had our breakfast. The other guide appeared with the fryingpan, and made our coffee; Walters drew out his knife and the leg of mutton, and the porter held a lantern as at supper.

Then we started. It was something like getting out of a garret-window in the middle of the night, and down the front of the house by the

window-sills. Walters affected to illuminate the whole process with his lantern, but we trusted rather to touch than sight, and lowered ourselves with hand and foot till we reached a slope down which we could scramble to the glacier.

The porter was left in the cave, and the minute we had quitted it, wrapped all our bedclothes about him, and turned in to enjoy himself. Our walk up the glacier was now much more broken than on the previous day, as we had to thread our way through the ice-fall, as it is sometimes called; besides, it was dark. So Walters put us all in rope, and taking the lantern and axe, set off towards a labyrinth of huge crevasses, among which the ascent lay. Then he showed himself a good glacier-man. With a single dim and dangling lantern, he worked steadily up without retracing one step, till he landed us on the snow-slopes above the head of the glacier. Looking down upon it when the day broke, we could hardly believe that our path had lain through such a series of ice-battlements. Yet our guide never hesitated, never stopped to think, never scratched his head, but now winding to the right, now striking on a snow-bridge here, now there, now cutting a few steps, now doubling to the left, now showing the brim of a crevasse with his lantern, and grunting a caution, he mounted tier

after tier of ice-cliffs till we stood upon the upper snows or névé. Then he quietly made a hole with his foot, and blowing out his candle, put the lantern into it with as perfect an assurance of finding the place on his return, as if he had placed it in a cupboard in his room at home.

It was now daybreak. The peaks around grew rosy as the sun began to show above the distant Italian mountains behind us; the intervening valleys took a warmer gray, but the wind felt keener as we rose. A series of simple but tiresome snow-slopes took us to the col of the Aletschorn, over which we looked upon the back of the Jungfrau, apparently on a level with us, and beyond, over a vast extent of country the other side of the Bernese Oberland. Far behind and beneath were the mountain-tops around the Lakes of Como and Maggiore. Here we sat down for our second breakfast. On our left, a thin ridge of snow, as sharp as any high-pitched roof, stretched upwards towards the summit of the mountain, falling sheer away on one side, apparently some thousand feet; on the other, sloping at the angle of, say fifty degrees to the horizon, till it went over a wall of rock. We discussed it, and thought it nearer sixty degrees at the time. On this frozen roof of snow, just as it were below the ridge-tiles, our path had to be made. It was really, though, no difficult

matter. Walters went first, and made every step with his ice-axe; we had only to plant our feet carefully in his marks, and mind that we stepped clear of the rope. Of course, such a place requires a pretty good head. Had one of the party slipped, very possibly he would have pulled the rest down the slope over the precipice to which it led, some two or three hundred feet below us. How far it went beyond that, we could not see. The chips of ice from Walters's axe-blows hopped away over the edge of the precipice in a moment with a quick jingling sound, something like broken glass; our alpenstocks occasionally went through the ridge below the edge of which we walked, and when we drew them out, gave little round views into space, just above our knees. We went on thus cutting steps for a little more than an hour, till we reached easy snow-slopes again. By this time, however, the wind had risen, the clouds gathered, and the snow began to fall. This last, at a high elevation, is like coarsely-pounded ice or hail, and stings sharply; moreover, it not only came down but rose up, whisking off the slopes, and flickering around the summit we approached with leaps more like those of flame than smoke. I do not know to what else I can resemble this singular uprising of the snow.

We plodded on, now and then breaking into a

crevasse; but the worst part of the ascent was done. There were only a few snow-slopes and a short *arête* to be passed. We hoped to be on the summit within two hours, when all at once Walters stopped and asked us if we should like to go on. The thought of turning back had not entered our heads; we were taking the snow-storm as a part of the day's business; and though the view from the top promised to be limited, we had every intention of seeing what it was like. This suggestion of Walters, however, made us think that perhaps something was wrong. It was rather late in the summer, when storms begin to be severe; perhaps he expected a frost-biting. The ascent would certainly not be worth the risk of losing one's nose or ears. However, we decided to go forward; so on we went. Presently, he stopped again. Would we go on? The summit though nearer, was dim with snow; the wind was still rising; but why should Walters suggest our retreat? True, he said he would go on if we desired it, but he had taken the initiative in hinting a return. Twice he had pulled us up with the inquiry whether we wished to proceed.

It was very provoking. He had reasons for stopping our ascent, just as it was being completed, or he would not have spoken as he did; he knew best. We didn't want to be frost-bitten, or

lose the sense of feeling in either hands or feet in descending the sharp snow-ridge, where we needed all our wits about us. What should we do?

We stopped, and had a palaver. Walters shrugged his shoulders, tied his pocket-handkerchief over his ears, and would not accept the responsibility of a decision one way or the other. The second guide echoed Walters's words and gestures.

With heavy hearts, we decided to turn back, as wise and valuable men. In a moment the charm of the situation was gone; we did not care for the view; we took no interest in our work, and retraced our steps to the col, along the snow-ridge, in a spirit of dogged carefulness.

We saw afterwards why Walters wished us to return; though there was a fine day beneath it, a tremendous snow-storm came on, and cut the top of the peak clean off; we could not see a sign of it. But the provoking part was that, before the storm burst in its whole strength, it held off just long enough for us to have got to the top, had we gone on as we were going when Walters stopped. This was intolerable. We sat down on the col, and drank the champagne in moody, inglorious thirst.

Walters then suggested another attempt, but we said "No;" and it was well we did, for had we

tried the summit then, we should have been caught in the full force of the storm, which soon came on, and raged above us as we crossed the great glacier homewards.

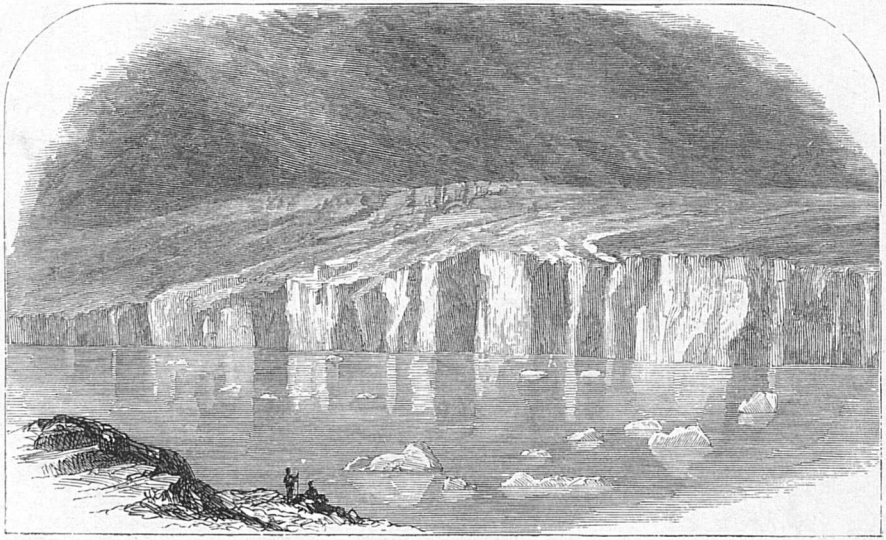
On our return, we made several *glissades*, and thus slid quickly over slopes up which we had toiled in the morning. Sitting down behind each other, we went along at a famous pace. As soon as we had worked our way through the descending ice-fall, Walters took off the rope, and we strolled leisurely across the glacier back towards the inn, stopping now and then, partly to eat, partly to rest, partly because we had no heart to go home with our object unaccomplished.

The whole expedition passed without any other mischance. Of course, we all tumbled down, but being in rope, this did us no harm. It is not pleasant, however, to slip at the edge of a crevasse, even though you know you will be pulled out, if you happen to fall in. There is no particular difficulty in the ascent of the Aletschorn. You must have a pretty good head, and be prepared to give some twenty-four hours to the expedition. We were not all quite fresh when we got home; I confess to being tired, but I was hungry at dinner and sleepy at night, which are both good signs after any unusual exertion. I was not alone in feeling a sense of weariness, for, on crossing the

Aeggischorn on our return, we all sat down gladly on the top of the col for a few minutes, and Stückül fell fast asleep directly he had lit his pipe, which, however, he still held tight between his teeth during his nap.

Had we reached the summit of the peak, we should have raced home; as it was, I felt that we had merely had a Night among the Glaciers.

We spent another day at the Aeggischorn in a visit to the Marjelen See, which is a lake about three miles long and perhaps more than half a mile broad, adjoining the great Aletsch glacier. Its head washes the glacier itself, which stands up above in steep ice-cliffs, from twenty-five to about fifty feet high, and often drops large fragments which send a wave of splash throughout the lake in which they fall, and then float off in minature icebergs. Looking down on the Marjelen See from the top of the Aeggischorn, its deep blue water presents a striking contrast to the snowy glacier, and the icebergs, floating on it far beneath the spectator show like little pieces of white paper. It is one of the most striking features of the view from that point. To get to it you must turn off to the right by the second patch of water you come to on your way up the mountain. Take care not to get too low down, as this involves a corresponding ascent. You go over the range of the Aeggis-



THE MARJELEN SEE AND ICE-CLIFFS OF THE ALETSCH GLACIER.

chorn some way to the right of the highest peak, which is marked with a wooden cross. Directly you have set foot on the ridge you look down on the Marjelen See, and the descent is quite easy. We walked down, when I got on one of the little icebergs, and could have navigated the whole lake if I had had a proper paddle. I understand that Herr Wellig intends to have a boat upon it. Since I wrote this the See has gone, having broken the barrier at its lower end. But as it as suffers from these accidents, I may as well let my description stand, since it will probably soon gather again. Poor Wellig had just provided a boat for it when the lake slipped away.

When returning we sat on the ridge for half an hour, looking, for the last time that autumn, on the view over the lake, right up the great frozen highway which led to the *col* of the Jungfrau. In some respects this view is more striking and eccentric than that from the top of the Aeggischorn. The still, dark blue lake, with its keen-edged reflection of the ice-cliffs, has no parallel in Switzerland. The Aletsch glacier on our left, and the Viesch on our right, leading by the Oberaarjoch to the Grimsel, gave, at the same time, as remarkable examples of the great approaches to the heart of the ice kingdom as we could have found.

The sun was getting low, and the snows red.

There was not a breath of air. A stone loosened from beneath our feet would have bounded down into the Marjelen See, which lay many hundred feet beneath us, and sent rings of waves throughout its width; but not a ripple broke the sharp edge of the reflected ice-cliffs. We could hear the bells of some cows in pastures behind us, leisurely walking home, miles off, apparently, and showing no bigger than mice. Two ravens sailed along the slopes of the Aeggischorn, and their croak sounded as if close by. We gathered some exquisite gentians which grew at hand, and walked slowly homewards to the inn. When we had taken ten steps down the view was gone. It had already dipped behind the ridge. Before us lay the boundary mountains of Italy and Switzerland, and presently came in sight the square, solitary hotel, with its high-pointed roof and suggestive smoking chimneys.

After a day or two at the Aeggischorn we went to Brieg. We had intended going from the Aeggischorn direct to the Bel Alp, where there is another mountain inn on the other side of the great Aletsch glacier, and lower down in its course. This walk is easy enough, taking about five or six hours. The path leads across the glacier, but at a part where it is traversed without any difficulty. Circumstances, however, led us to Brieg, the last

town at the head of the lower Valais, and at the foot of the Simplon Pass. A porter carried our traps down, and got a little chaise ready for us at Viesch, into which we stepped directly we reached the bottom of the mountain.

As we descended we felt the change of air much; we walked down into a hot bath. Farewell for a day to the keen oxygen of the hills: we exchanged the marvellously bracing summer frosts for the soft moisture-laden breath of the valley.

The drive to Brieg, which takes something under two hours, has been spoken of with disparagement. It is, however, very pretty, and in one place where the road crosses a gorge of the Rhone, and the rock strata stand upright, very striking. We had a cheery coachman, who nodded to all we met. "You have many friends," said I. "We are all friends here," he replied; and so it seemed. On our way we passed other ascents to the Aeggischorn, and at last came in sight of the minarets of Brieg. It looks like what I imagine a Moorish or Eastern town to be. I counted seven minarets from the bridge over the Rhone. It is a dusty place, with two rival post hotels, and such a lack of arrangement that it might be the material for a town—streets and houses tumbled promiscuously out upon the ground, like a gigantic child's toy, and not yet put together. It is distinguished by

a huge mansion belonging to the Stockalper family, who made themselves famous for their refuges by the wayside on the old Simplon road; but their home looks desolate now. Brieg, which once, doubtless, was a fashionable feudal city, is now simply the last stage in the valley, and is probably remembered by travellers more for the number of hostlers about its yard, and its reserve of dusty yellow diligences, than for the sake of its historical fame. We went to the "Hôtel de la Poste," where the dining-room is on the second floor, as you reckon stairs from the front entrance, but from the window of which you seem to walk out on solid ground, and are on a level with a gritty gravel yard with some green-painted wooden seats blistered by the sun.

Our party was now increased by my brother and his wife. We all slept at Brieg one night, and started for the Bel Alp early the next morning. The little mountain inn there belongs to the landlord of the "Poste," and you can see it plainly from the back door of the hotel, showing like a dingy yellow dot (it is built of new unpainted deal) on the shoulder of some high pastures several hours above the town. We walked up quietly; for though the hour was early, the sun shone straight upon our backs. The ladies had a horse each, and another carried our united luggage. The

path in some places is cruelly rough, and slippery withal. After passing two villages, we came to a long steep grass slope, which promised a shorter way to the inn than the horses could follow; so we sent the ladies round by the regular zigzags, and set our faces against the tempting swell of green. Commend me to a sharp grass slope if you want a back-ache. There is no change in the play of the muscles as you climb; and besides the continuous dead tug, there is generally the slipperiness of the grass. On this occasion, too, the sun was very powerful, and seemed to set the marrow in one's backbone frying.

When we got to the top there was the inn, not many yards off. As I walked towards it a lady with whom we had become acquainted in our tour, and whom we knew to be there, looked out of a window, and said there was no chance of our getting a room in the place. The place was the inn; for though there were some half-dozen chalets scattered about the shoulder of the Alp, the pigs at their doors, and heaps of manure around them, said all at once to eye and ear and nose, "You can't lodge here."

Then the ladies came up on their horses. The guides who led them wiped their foreheads, returned their pocket-hankerchiefs to their hats, and began to undo the luggage with an air which

showed that people who chose might find room, though Mariette, the manager of the establishment, now came forward and confirmed our friend's greeting about the fulness of the house.

In these cases quietly go in and settle yourself. Room will be found. My brother and I had brought up our wives into the mountain, intending to leave them here while we went off on the tramp, and were not going to carry them down again at once. I thought so. "If the ladies wouldn't mind a room through which the cook had to pass . . . ." Not they, for a pinch; so we hauled in the carpet-bags and took possession, my brother and I being promised a shake-down on the floor of the *salle à manger*.

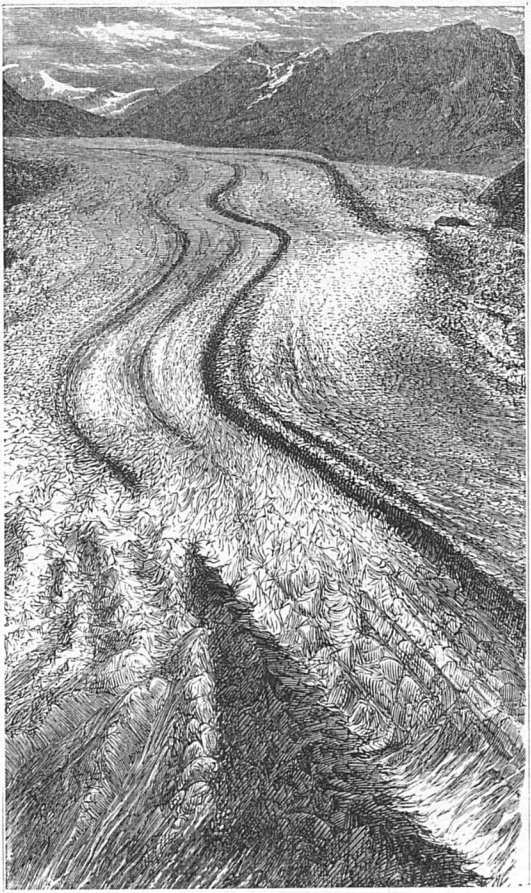
IV.—FROM BRIEG TO DOMO D'OSSOLA.

WE stopped for only one night at the "Bel Alp," and that was spent in the *salle à manger*. When the last of the guests had dropped off, the head waiter, chambermaid, and manager of the establishment—for she combined all these offices in her own person—brought four mattresses, and spread them for my brother, myself, and two other gentlemen tourists who were roomless in the house. It is not always easy to sleep in a dining-room except it be directly after dinner. Two of our party

could; but the third, whose mattress, by the way, was farthest from mine, began a general discussion of all manner of routes in Switzerland before daylight. I answered with gradually dissipated incoherence, till I was wide awake, and still the voice came out of the dark corner, prattling on about this pass, that inn, and the other scenery. There was no help for it but to get up, which I did at dawn, and went at once to a neighbouring waterfall for my morning bath. Ugh! it is chilly taking off your socks in the keen, grey, early twilight, and toddling to the white cascade over the dewy ground. The shock is horrible; but the subsequent glow makes you feel as red as a lobster. Let me warn any novice about bathing in these cascades. It looks a simple thing to step under the descending shoot, but it generally falls with such force as to knock you ingloriously down, unless you manage the thing dexterously. Lay hold on something, a bough if possible, or a jutting piece of rock, and don't stay in the cascade too long. Pass in, and have done with it. Rub yourself dry at once, and then woe betide the breakfast which awaits your hungry assault.

The view from the "Bel Alp" is very fine. Across the valley from which you have ascended, much the same mountains show themselves as from the Aeggischorn; but you can look down on

the ice without further climbing; you can stroll a few yards from the inn door, and see the great Aletsch glacier sweeping by beneath you, as it is turned aside by the slopes of the Aeggischorn, and winding among the mountains at great length, but with both its ends out of sight. The *moraines* of the various glaciers which feed it show like wheel-tracks. My brother irreverently compared it to a turnpike road in a thaw. The walks in the neighbourhood of the inn are numerous and varied; so we learnt from our wives when we picked them up in returning from our excursion into Italy. We tried only one. After breakfast we ascended the Sparrenhorn, or Bel Horn, a peak which commands extensive views, and is about two hours' walk from the inn. We saw little but cloud. As we rose and felt the air growing colder, patches of snow occurring more and more frequently during the ascent, the weather changed, and we could see nothing but the edges of the ridge up which we climbed. There is an easy winding path fit for good lady-walkers: we went, however, straight on, and now and then had glimpses of a special grandeur, which we should have missed had the day been fine. When you stand in the clouds upon the brink of a precipice, and see no bottom whatever, there is a weird sense of being above the world which no other elevation gives. We



THE GREAT 'ALETSCH GLACIER. FROM THE BEL ALP.

rolled large stones down into space, and heard them crashing below with echoes which were magnified by the mist.

On our return, when we had got below the stratum of clouds into clear weather, we dammed up the course of one of the mountain torrents with sods and pieces of rock till we made a pool, and then had another bath.

After dinner we settled our knapsacks on our backs, and walked down into Brieg, our wives accompanying us to the top of the steep grass slope up which we had ascended in coming. This was soon passed, and we sunk quietly down again into the warm air of the valley. On our way I found a large colony of wood ants. There was a dead fir-tree lying by the side of the path, and beneath it what appeared to be a heap of fresh sawdust. Wondering for the moment where this could have come from, I noticed that the prostrate trunk was pierced with a number of little holes and grooves. We soon saw the origin of the sawdust: a large ant ran to the mouth of one of the holes with his mouth full of wood; seeing us observing him, he dropped it nervously, and backed out of sight. The heap of sawdust was a heap of mouthfuls, which the patient ants had bitten out of the tree, and then ejected from the doors of their house. Presently the little hodman we had surprised came

back with half a dozen or more mates. The alarm was given: out flocked the workmen, remonstrant, curious, and agitated. But, oh! the indignation and tumult when my brother stooped down and sent a puff of tobacco-smoke into the middle of them! Leaving this small world in the full interchange of gesture and speculation, we strolled down into Brieg, where the people were neither so numerous nor busy as those in the little colony by the road-side—the insect town, where all were alive to passing impressions, but where each had his work to do and did it.

Here we hoped to meet my old friend J. who was at Chamouni. I was leaning with my elbows on the window-sill of the wonderful dining-room, which is at the same time on the first and second floor, and which looks out on the dip from the bridge into the town of Brieg, when he came clattering over the stones in a carriage, with a white long-tailed weeper, such as mutes wear at a child's funeral, tied round his hat. This is the correct thing at Chamouni, and really preserves the head and neck from the effect of the sun's rays better than any other known arrangement. The white declines being heated, and the tail acts as a shade to the strip of skin between the coat collar and the hat brim, and which is sometimes scorched raw by a few long days of unbroken glare.

We were soon in full consultation, and decided to walk over the Simplon the next morning into Italy, and come back by the Monte Moro. Then we hired a hard-looking young fellow to carry our knapsacks, and contemplated our deliverance from the hot little town of Brieg with satisfaction.

My brother and I had seen more of it than J. for we had spent a whole day there waiting for him, and I will not say exhausted the resources of the place, for that implies gross want of observation anywhere, but really saw and found out a good deal that was going on. First, we had a long talk with the landlord about his inn on the "Bel Alp," and gave him lots of advice. He told us that he was about building a very much larger one: if so, and he manages it as well as Herr Wellig does the hotel on the Aeggischorn, it will be one of the most favourite spots in all Switzerland. I know no other where you are seven thousand feet above the sea, and can gaze your fill at glaciers without fatigue, or take beautiful high mountain walks with no more climbing than a fair walker can manage, and at the same time be within easy reach of the great icefield and its ambitious ascents.

We talked to the landlord and poked about in the town all the afternoon. In the morning we had fallen in with a great religious festival. The

end window of the *salle à manger* looks over the bridge and down a perfectly straight road lined with poplars and carpeted with thick white dust. At the end there is a church with a red spire, in striking constrast to the green of the surrounding trees and pastures. An old German gentleman and myself were the last at breakfast. He had a huge ring on his forefinger, and eat, noisily, quantities of "comfiture," while he read the "Bund," tilted up against the milk-jug. Presently he rose, gathered up two more newspapers, stepped out on the little gritty terrace from the end window, laid down the two journals he couldn't yet read upon a chair, and set a stone on them to mark a prior claim and prevent the wind from blowing them away. Then he sat down very hard on a bench, and read as greedily as he had eaten. Meanwhile I had looked and looked down the poplar avenue, till I felt a sort of fascination in that irresistibly straight perspective. Many people in twos and threes went down it out of the town, growing less and less in the distance. They all had on their best clothes, and among them I saw numbers of peasants and goatherds from the mountains. All went the same way—towards the church with the red spire, which seemed to swallow them up. At last my brother and I obeyed the impulse and set off to follow them. The thick white dust was

dotted with the nails of a thousand highlows. As we drew near the church, the sound of music floated out into the hot summer air, and we saw a fringe of kneeling figures round the doors of the building. They knelt there while the service was going on, because there was no room inside. We went to the west porch, and, mingling in the crowd, heard that the bishop had come to preach a sermon specially to the young people who had just been confirmed. He was then officiating at the altar, but the sermon-time soon came. Taking his crosier in hand, and wearing his mitre, he walked to the entrance of the chancel and delivered an earnest extempore address in the *patois* of the Valais. We could not understand a word of it; but the poor people, who rose from their seats and gathered round him like sheep, nodded to each other, or looked down, or rubbed an eye, as each sentence hit the mark. An old man by my side, seamed with the mountain storms of some eighty years, clinched all the best bits of the bishop's sermon into his grandson, who was at his elbow, with an emphasis which showed that he had either found comfort in the advice, whatever it was, or had no notion of letting the young people off what he had gone through himself. I believe these people of the Valais are very superstitious. We found them poor, civil, and honest. I fear, though,

education is too often checked by some of the more conservative Papists among the clergy. In this respect, there is a great difference between the Romish and Protestant cantons. Some have attributed the misery of the canton Valais to the well-known superstition of its inhabitants. I verily believe that a bad creed will so far make a bad workman, and that there is an immorality in the principle of Popery (which I hate with all my heart) mischevious, if not fatal, to true Christian progress of all kinds; but the drawbacks of nature must be taken into account, as well as those of theology, and a fair allowance made for poor doctrine when it is accompanied by poor soil.

Next morning it rained. Should we go by the diligence? While we debated it drove off and left us looking at the clouds. In about an hour and a half they cleared away, and we summoned our porter to his work. I expected that we were to travel by the regular carriage-road, and was therefore hardly prepared for the rough walking of an ordinary Alpine footpath. We had not, however, gone far before we found that there were three ways over the Simplon. There is the famous main carriage-road; next, the remains of a paved bridle path; thirdly, one which can be traversed only on foot. We, or rather our guide, took this last, occasionally touching or crossing one of the

others. Of all the porters we ever had this was about the strongest. He frisked along with our three knapsacks as if they had been stuffed with wind. But when we had mounted about three quarters of an hour he began to descend. Now, I do not know anything more tiresome than to do this while you are ascending a mountain. It seems all labour lost. You have risen so many feet, and now every step takes from the success of the past, and adds to the toil of the future. We remonstrated. It was the shortest route, he said. There was no reasonable help for it. He had the pack, and extra labour was of more consequence to him than to us. So we let him go on, down, down, down, with cruel monotony, till we appeared to have undone all our morning's work. Then we came to a stream and a village, where at last he began to mount once more. The route, though shut in, was fine, the path, however, but little used; for few tourists walk over the Simplon now. Everybody drives. Presently we reached a dairy chalet in the gorge up which we were rising, and he swung off his load for a few minutes' rest. Generally these picturesque chalets, with their groups of cows, are almost inaccessible, from the dirt and muck-heaps accumulated around them. This was peculiar for its filthiness and stench. However, our guide went in and brought us out

a great bowl of milk. Would we drink? "No, thank you." So he put his lips to it and emptied some half a pailful into himself. He was an honest, hungry fellow, and amused us by a good deal of simple sense. As almost all these Swiss are great consumers of tobacco, J. offered him a cigar. "No thank you," said he. "Smoking is a very expensive habit; besides," he added, "it makes me sick."

Every now and then we had glimpses of the great road on our left, and at last rose by a sharp ascent out of the valley, and found ourselves upon it close to the summit of the Pass, which is marked by a cross. In a few minutes we were overtaken by the diligence, which had started an hour and a half before us. We did not go into the monastery here, which is related to that on the great St. Bernard, but pushed on without stopping to the village of Simplon, an hour and a half more. Our porter, however, pulled up at the hospice, and could not be made to stir without a promise of extra pay, though we understood that we had hired him to Simplon itself. He could hardly get by the monks' good cheer. One of them stood hospitably at the door ready to receive us, as well as any passengers from the diligence; but the clouds threatened again, and we wanted to get over the pass. The hospice on the Simplon is a

large, plain, ugly building, like a union-house. The brethern, however, are very pleasant, for I heard of them from a friend who was in search of cool air and had stayed there for a week.

We now kept to the main road. There is this great difference between the descents into Italy by the Simplon and the St. Gothard. From the latter you can soon see the first Italian town, Airolo, with others beyond it, lying immediately beneath you, and can cut off many corners from the great zigzags down which the carriage-road is carried. On the Simplon you can hardly, except in one spot, before the gorge of Gondo is reached, below the village of Simplon, save a yard by leaving the main route. The rain came down in streams by the time we reached the village and got into the little hotel, "Fletschorn." We were terribly hungry. It was indeed no more than half-past twelve, but we had walked sharply for some six hours, and cried aloud for dinner the moment we entered the inn. I thought of some description I had read, in which that meal was called "a battle with hunger." J. who rather piques himself, and justly, on being a judge of cookery, said he never tasted anything nicer than the dishes which the landlord almost immediately put upon the table. They were in truth strong and coarse. We had, I know, among other doubtful things,

some sheep's liver and rancid bacon; but they all melted away before the Alpine appetite. Meanwhile the rain ceased, and we bethought ourselves of the road once more. Our porter we had paid off; indeed, he was pretty well used up. The landlord, however, said he had a strong lad who could carry our traps to Isella, and, if we pleased, on to Domo d'Ossola. So we started, but had not gone far before we found our new man betray the difference between the Swiss and Italian side of the Alps. We employed him for only two hours and a half, and that down-hill, but he was terribly tired, poor fellow, and we gave up all thought of taking him on further; indeed, we desired him to follow us at his own pace. The way between the Simplon village and Isella lies through the most beautiful part of the descent, the gorge of Gondo. Perpendicular rocks on either hand made a great rugged stone corridor for us, many hundred feet high, which was ceiled with cloud. On our right the river roared down with double speed from the late rain, and was increased by several magnificent waterfalls, which seemed to come from the sky. These wayside cascades are to me far grander than the stock terminal ones which you are taken to see. We knew that the gorge of Gondo was famous in a land famed for the grandeur of its passes; but the prospect of the waterfalls was lost

in the rugged wildness of the road, until we came upon them. I think that the foulness of the weather rather added to the special savageness of the scenery than diminished it. We could not see the tops of the cliffs which shut us in, but looked up at a roof of cloud resting on the rough wet walls of stone between which we passed.

Isella, which we reached at five o'clock, consists apparently of a custom-house and a dining-room. The inn is next door to the Dogana, where your luggage is examined for Italy; and when you have walked a few yards below this, you have passed the place. We dried ourselves at the fire, for it was cold, and chatted to a solitary weather-bound Englishman, who seemed to be the only person in the place. We felt ourselves already in Italy: there was a languid softness in the air, though there was still a long descent to the open valleys and the plains.

Opposite the front windows of the inn, just across the torrent which skirted the road, the rocks rose in perpendicular cliffs, broken here and there by narrow terraces of vegetation, and streaked with small, tributary, extemporized cascades. On the right hand, ten yards off, three or four custom-house officers in uniform smoked and lounged under a porch. Up and down in the middle of the road there strutted a damp but vain Cochin China

cock. This was our view all the evening and all the next day. The diligences indeed broke its monotony by changing their horses, which smoked in the thick atmosphere; but the passengers sat still inside the steam-dimmed windows, and soon left the stage to the cock. It was a depressing prospect. We studded the raised map of Switzerland which hung in the *salle à manger*, and decided that it was modelled by spreading two slabs with cement, and pulling them apart while it was still wet. Then we wrote, told stories, watched the torrent's rise by the disappearance of stones in its bed, and put our hands out to feel the rain. Still the cock paced up and down, occasionally making a peck here and there, but proclaiming himself by his silent assurance, the only male bird in the place.

What if we could undeceive him? One of our party, who was a pretty good hand, or rather voice at it, put his head out of the window and gave a defiant crow. He looked up and down the road and walked with higher steps. Another crow. Still no response, but evidently a growing consciousness that some notice must be taken of the matter. The custom-house officers were by this time watching the issue of the challenge, and one of them patted his hands together and cried gently "Bravo!" as if to show his interest in the scene,

and yet not interrupt the performers. Another crow. Then he shook his wings, set up his tail, straightened his neck, opened his mouth, and made a feeble Transalpine rejoinder such a as British cock would be ashamed of, amid the ironical cheers of the Dogana.

What could we do, wise reader, throughout a forty-eight hours' rain? We had come out for a holiday, and the only volume in the room was the travellers' book, the wit of which we were not inclined to immortalize ourselves by perpetuating. And here let me enter a protest against the weak drollery which people are sometimes tempted to write there, when full of idleness and dinner.

The book at Isella was one of the worst I ever saw. It was full of dreary attempts at humour, especially by—I forbear telling you this time—who had made many of the entries. Another great mistake of scribbling tourists is to praise or blame the inn to which the book belongs. These notes are found too late for the traveller to profit by them; whereas, when they are written in one belonging to the nearest halting-place, they are often of service. There are generally some of these considerate entries, but most are read when people have the experience of the inn itself to teach them. This at Isella had been absurdly praised; consequently the people had grown care-

less, and we found the fare and attendance rather below the average.

Before we left it the inn was full. The road above us had been rendered impassable by the storm, and a party returned after attempting to cross the pass. The diligence was delayed, the letters being sent on by hand.

Our first day's walk after this detention was only to Domo d'Ossola. The rain had ceased, and the sun shone. When we reached the wider valley towards the plains the view was exquisite. We had just been shivering with cold. Now we sat down by the wayside close by the vine, cactus, and aloe, and, spreading our paper map open, made out the living natural map which lay beneath us. Numerous villages and towns dotted the landscape with their white houses. The campaniles, or bell-towers of the churches, rose among the walnut groves, and dark-skinned, black-eyed peasant women, with bright red kerchiefs, answered our questions in Italian.

The walk to Domo took us three hours, but we dawdled on the road, and bought figs and grapes by the wayside.

Domo is a thoroughly Italian town. We went to the "Hotel Albasini," where we found the landlord smoking outside his gate. He was a smiling and courteous man, but in showing us our

rooms, so much for national habit, kept his cigar between his teeth, and preceded us about his house puffing all the while like a steam-tug.

V.—FROM DOMO D'OSSOLA TO LUGANO.

DOMO is a place at which few tourists care to stop, and yet it well repays more than a flying glimpse. Our hotel, which lay without the town, promised all manner of attractions in its advertisements; but there was not a single guest under its roof when Signor Albasini towed us over his establishment.

The fact is, that people hurry to the lakes when they have decided to cross the Alps. The lakes are part of the Swiss tour. The lower part of the canton Ticino is as Italian as any thing in Italy, and yet it is Swiss. Those who visit Switzerland aright must cross the Alps; but, as I said, they do so at too great a speed. They hasten from Fluelen to Lugano, or Brieg to Lago Maggiore, with little more interest in much of the scenery through which they pass than that they are passing it by as fast as they can. They want a railroad over the Simplon, which shall whisk them from the pastures and the cow-bells of the keen Alpine path to the soft moonshine and ripe figs of Baveno. Certainly the sudden transition is sensational, and

spurs the appetite of the jaded or shallow tourist. But there are thoughts, fresh and savoury, which a deliberate reflective descent into Italy is well able to arouse. The great fixed features of Alpine scenery which there reveal themselves connect the sensations of all ages, like the moon, which shows alike to the sphinx in the desert and cat on the tiles. You cross a pass, and find yourself still shut up. You get down into another vegetation; trees, fruits, language, dress, manners change; and still you cannot get out of the great crack in the chain by which you have come over its ridge—you still walk or ride down a valley with high walls or slopes of rock on either hand. This gives, more than anything else, to my mind at least, an idea of the size of the Alps, and must have filled the first explorers of these valleys with awe and expectation. How many hordes and armies, how many lonely huntsmen and adventurous leaders of their tribes, have pursued their upward winding path in uncertainty or fear! Here the Alps first really impressed themselves and their belongings upon man. Elsewhere they were seen: here they were felt. It was one thing to gaze at the bright snow-ridge of peaks, another to seek a gap in their chain.

At first, I believe, the Alps disappoint travellers. They expect something up in the skies, and are

surprised to find that they can look at the highest summits without sticking their chins up in the air. *That* the range crossed by the Simplon and St. Gothard roads! Pheugh! And they sneeze at it with distant disdain. But they approach, and the great features grow; they lose sight of the summits; they mount; at last they begin to descend; but still the hills shut them in, and it is not till they issue in the plains of Italy and look back at the jagged ridge which shows itself against the sky, and remember the hours of wind and snow they spent in passing them, though by the simplest, easiest road, that they pay a late tribute of complimentary retrospect to the loftiest mountain range in Europe.

In passing from Switzerland proper to the Italian side, the traveller is struck with the fewness of the roads. From Brieg to Domo there is one, and one only, if you except the branch off to the left, just before you reach the latter town by the bridge. There is the main road, and no more. You may walk on for twelve hours at a time, and have no chance of asking your way. Not that there are no passengers, for there are generally several; but there is no way but that under the nose: you see nothing on either side but an occasional mountain-path. Say you want to go from the Lake of Lucerne to that of Maggiore: you go

up a road by the side of one torrent, and then, after crossing the flat top of the range, go down by the side of another torrent.

The passage of the Alps, I may say now, assists you in forming an idea of the lakes better than any map or description: they are strung on the rivers which flow down from the great Alpine range between Switzerland and North Italy.

If you could walk along the jagged snow-ridge which divides the two countries, you would see a succession of white streams hurrying downwards right and left. In a short time most of these are dammed up among the lesser hills, which break the descent from the high mountains into the plains of Germany and Piedmont, and form deep, irregular lakes. On the northern side a straggling succession of these is formed from Geneva to Constance; on the southern, a group of which Como and Maggiore are the chief. The rivers which supply them issue originally from beneath the glaciers (which are the great water-tanks of Europe), and, after gathering mountain torrents in their hasty descent, rush into the nearest lakes white with foam and often thick with mud. On leaving them they flow with a clearer and more even stream, as if, on reflection, they thought a statelier carriage became their progress through civilized Europe. A mountaineer shifts his jacket and hob-

nails for a coat and shapelier boots when he reaches the great roads and cities of the Continent. He no longer jumps from stone to stone, but travels smoothly along the worn highways towards his home. Thus *e.g.*, the Rhone and the Rhine, which start with rough exterior and at boisterous speed from the same region of ice and peaks, after repose in the lakes, visit the towns, and share the society of Europe in subdued spirits and appropriate dress.

Having seen the rivers fairly off, let us return to the lakes. In your imaginary walk along the Alpine ridge you would observe them on the northern side, from Geneva to Constance, scattered irregularly over a district between two hundred and three hundred miles in length; but the main group on the southern or Italian side is brought together in a space some thirty-five miles in breadth by fifty-five in depth. It is true that the Lago di Garda is about fifty miles, as the crow flies, from that of Como, and so breaks the compact companionship of the Italian lakes; but, supposing there were straight roads and a succession of bridges for him to do it upon, a man could walk right across Maggiore, Lugano, Como, and their satellites, in a day.

This group, when first looked at in the map, seems capriciously entangled; but you may notice

that the three chief lakes have their heads all pointing towards the north-east, and their southern extremities finished off either in smaller lochs or intricate bays and windings.

One principle of distribution explains them all. The nearer to the Alps, the more compact they are. As the hills are subdivided towards the plains, the tails of the lakes, which lie among them, are broken or twisted. Thus, Como is not only split into two legs towards the south, but has four or five lakelets about its feet; while the Lago di Varese, and those of Monate, Comabbia, and Orta, besides a parcel of ponds, cluster about the southern extremity of Maggiore. Lugano, which lies half-way between this and Como, resembles its large neighbours in having its head tied up, as it were, towards the great mountains, and its tail flapping about towards the plains. It runs into Lago Maggiore, but is separated from Como by a range of hills. Lugano, of which more presently, as we are on our way there, is unlike the two other large lakes, in being the drainage of a Subalpine district, and not receiving its waters from any glacier-born river. Still, it is like the rest in being entangled among the spurs of the Alps, and, by flowing into Maggiore, it unites its waters to those of the Ticino, which springs from the glaciers of the St. Gothard.

Those who travel for change had best approach the lakes by one of the great mountain passes, and not sneak up to them by railway from Milan. If you do, you see, and want to get to, the high Alps; whereas, on coming down from them, you are charmed to find a fresh stratum of scenery before you are landed on the flats.

The transition from ice and peaks to the plains and the grapes is heightened by several other changes. If you choose you may shift climate, religion, architecture, dress, vegetation, and language in a day. This is more striking when done in a carriage than, say, a steamboat. In the latter you are quickly paddled or screwed from one land to another; but you appreciate the gulf you pass. You are sick, and look out for the little red-legged soldiers of France, with a consciousness that you are about to set foot on a foreign and un-English land. But when you drive, one country melts into another like the slides of a dissolving view. A German hostler puts your horses to: they jog on, jingling and cracking, until all at once you find an Italian taking them out.

But to return to Domo. We found ourselves alone in the "Hôtel Albasini," and the very focus of attention. The landlord took us over his garden with pride, though the beds had an unkempt look to an eye which loves the velvet lawns of England.

The daughter took us over the house, showing a mineralogical cabinet, and a view from a tower above the roof. Altogether we were very civilly and cheaply treated, and were almost sorry to leave when a little one-horse carriage we had ordered came to the door to take us to Baveno, on the Lago Maggiore. Our vehicle was a leathery, gritty concern, as if built of old portmanteaus and sand-paper. There were two comfortable seats behind, and one by the side of the driver, small, slippery, and without rails, which was most uncomfortable. This we took by turns. The carriage drew up at the door; the three knapsacks were tied on with apparently a hundred yards of cord; the alpenstocks were stuck somewhere underneath; the landlord shook hands with us; then the daughter shook hands with us; then the landlord took off his cap and bowed; then the driver cracked his whip, called his horse a "sacred hog," and we dashed away at the rate of some four miles an hour. Our driver addressed his horse with loud and incessant entreaty or abuse. The road lay through a flat, with a stony river-bed streaked with a small, blue, summer stream on one side. Around us were mountains showing clear in the soft, moist air over the tops of trees. Many villages dotted their sides, and houses seemed to creep up them, as if the air below were charged with

malaria, as is probably the case. The railway embankment showed itself here and there; but our driver said there was no prospect of its being finished for thirty years more. He reflected the opinion of the valley, no doubt; but in a shorter time than that the simple cows and horses of the place will stick up their tails and scamper off at the rush and whistle of the train. What a contrast it will be to the present vehicles of the district! When we met another, each sidled off, leaving space enough for a cab between them as they passed, the drivers looking round at their respective hind wheels, and letting their animals down into a walk. Up-hill we went as fast as if we had been at plough, and up-hill meant the slightest ascent. Our driver was a conversable fellow, but had no eye for the picturesque. What did he care for scenery? As we were passing the entrance of the beautiful Val Anzasca, however, he brightened up into enthusiasm, and pointed out some poor, clumsy figures which stood on the gate-posts of a wayside house—a bear, a pig, a fox, and a fiddler. "Look there!" cried he in the Italian *patois* of the valley: "look there!" and he laughed, and squeezed his eyes up till they were no bigger than the slit in a child's money-box. "Ho! ho! ho!" this was the view to be noticed on the road. Here was something worth looking at, if you

would. "Ha! ha! ha!" and giving his horse a cut and an epithet, he chuckled for a mile.

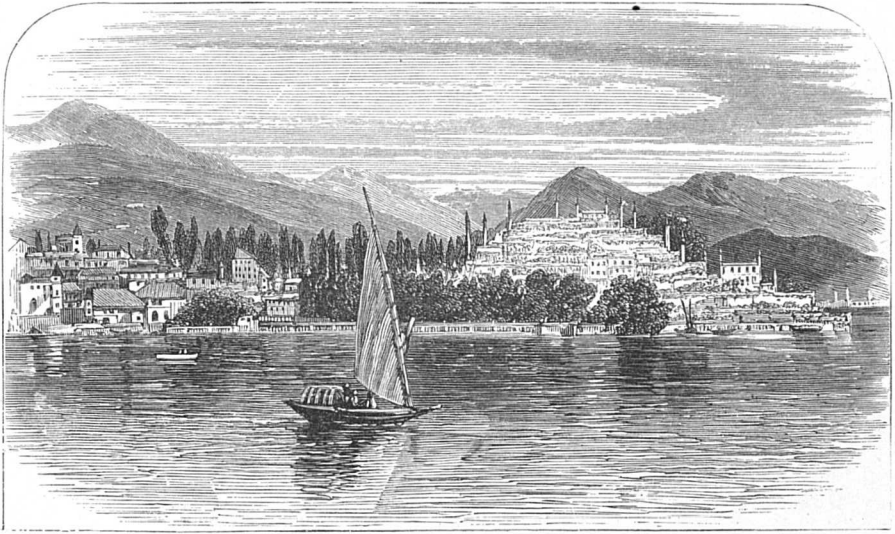
It is long before you get a glimpse of the Lake Maggiore by this road. Again and again you think you must come upon it; but you are still shut up. You cross the River Tosa two or three times, once by a flying bridge, which swings incessantly backwards and forwards across the stream throughout the day, picking up carts and passengers as it touches the shores of the stream. I have wondered that these bridges are not more used in England; they are most convenient. Indeed the swifter the stream is, and therefore the more difficult to row or push across, so much the more surely does the bridge act and save labour. As all my readers may not know what a flying bridge is, we will stop for a minute to tell them. It is a barge with its side set at an angle to the stream, and anchored with a long cable, so that it may have good room for swinging, and yet not be carried down the river. Suppose the barge lying alongside the bank, touching the quay with its side. If you were to push its bows off with a boat-hook, the stream would soon get in between it and the quay, and carry it away. But if stopped from going down stream by a long rope fixed at some distance up the river, it would sidle across to the opposite bank and hang there. It is by know-

ing this that a most useful means of transit across a rapid river has been arranged. The stronger the current, the more surely the barge is pushed across by it. The river is incessantly trying to shove the barge out of its way. When its nose sticks out first into the stream the river says, "Get down." But the barge cannot get down: it is anchored. "Get on one side, then," says the river, and hustles the barge accordingly. The manager of the bridge has only to push the barge's nose off from the bank by which it is lying, and the river hurries it across to the opposite side at once. Sometimes, instead of a long cable with an anchor, the barge sidles over holding on to a stout rope stretched across the stream. This is the case with the flying bridge over the Tosa.

At last we reached the lovely Lago Maggiore. The air and water were still, and the hills were doubled by reflection. We passed by some rose-coloured granite quarries, and drove to Baveno. The road from Domo branches off to this place and Pallanza, either of which are suited to catch the line of steamers which ply continually up and down the lakes, or rather zigzag up and down them, for they touch successively at the villages on the opposite banks.

The situation of Baveno is very beautiful. You look diagonally across the lower part of the lake.

The most conspicuous objects on the other side are the mountains of Laveno, a graceful and striking group, which assert their claims to distinctive beauty in the midst of beautiful scenery. Off Baveno lie the famous Borromean Islands, immediately opposite Pallanza. But the sides of the lake are dotted with villages and towns, all alike at a distance. In clear weather the scenery is very mixed and charming, the lower bordering mountains being topped by snowy peaks beyond. The views in cloudy weather are, however, very lovely; indeed, I think I like them best; then you get the soft shadows of the clouds, and, especially after rain, miss the dry, gritty look of the sunburnt mountains. Moreover, when there is no glare the features of the scenery show themselves in clearer and more marked proportion. For distant snow views, or, indeed, for any of the highlands of Switzerland, give me a perfectly clear sky; but some of the best effects on the lakes are assisted by a few clouds. Lago Maggiore is in places very deep, and swarms with fish, many of which you can see from the pier where the steamboats stop. They will come up through the transparent water for bread and other victual, but are not easily caught with a hook. We were much struck with the sailing craft on the lake. Clumsy and antiquated, they creep along before the wind



ISOLA BELLA. LAGO MAGGIORE.

with one thin square sail, and rudder, which, handle and all, is quite as long as themselves. I never saw such enormous disproportion in the furniture of anything, in or out of the water. The steering apparatus of one of these boats looks as if it would turn a man of war, while the sail is flimsy and small. But they make a pretty reflection in the water, and are picturesque, if not practical.

To see a lake's scenery you should mount the hills around it. From the water itself most lakes in mountainous countries look alike. Here, however, you must go upon it to visit the Borromean Islands, if for nothing else. They are the sights of the place, and you are almost obliged to follow the tourist fashion and take them in your round. There are three principal ones: the Isola Madre, Isola Bella, and the Isola dei Pescatori. We put up at the "Belle Vue" hotel, and couldn't look over the low wall which divides the road before it from the beach, without incessant appeals from the boatmen to take a boat. So we yielded. The row-boats are like those on Roman antiques, more like walnut-shells in shape than any thing else; they are covered with awnings, and the boatmen row standing with their faces to the bows, pushing rather than pulling their oars. We went first to the Isola Bella, or Beautiful Island. It is an arti-

ficial structure, soil having been carried there at great labour and strewed on a bare rock. The soil chosen is rich, and the whole place is fitted with stoves, so as to keep up a tropical heat, or heat enough to support tropical plants throughout the winter. At one end there is a huge palace, as bare and ugly as a workhouse; while the rest of the island consists of terraced walks set with statues, etc., and planted with a great variety of foreign plants and trees. Of course there is no marvel in the thing: money would make a climate almost anywhere, and it is mere navigators' labour to transport so many barges full of dirt from one place to another. Thanks to the lake, the natural climate, and the surrounding scenery, the views from the island can hardly help being beautiful. But the place is praised and gone into raptures over as something magical and fairy-like. I don't know anything about fairies, but we paid our man to row us to this, their conventional representative abode. When the boat bumped against the steps of the palace, I looked up and saw one of the housemaids leaning over the parapet smoking a cigar and chatting with "Jeames." The last, seeing visitors, which means a "tip," deserted the maid, touched his hat, and proposed to show us the lions. After putting our names down in the hall, we were tramped round the palace. The palace is

like all others, only rather meaner and more uncomfortable. There are three or four good pictures, but most are rubbish, framed and varnished. There is always, of course, everywhere, a bed shown in which Napoleon, or some king, has slept. Here it was, I think, more hearse-like and sleep-deterring than usual, and a comfortable "tub" in one of these state chambers of a morning must ever have been inconsistent with the grandeur and proprieties of the place. Do heroes get out of bed at once into cocked hats and spurs? Do Powers and Potentates comb their hair? Do—there, that will do. They must have been very tired to sleep quietly in these fabrics, which seem constructed to protest against snugness. Well, when we had gone over the palace the footmen handed us over to the gardener, who marched us round the terraces with as much speed as was consistent with the prospect of his "tip." These gardens, however, though unnatural, are very interesting to the botanist, who here may see many plants which he knows of by name as natives of hot and distant lands, growing in the open air.

The Isola Madre, which is larger and less formal than the Isola Bella, is also rich with trees, fruits, and flowers, strange to the European climate. We found the gardeners very civil, and one of them, especially, an enthusiast in his business.

No one visits the third island, the Isola dei Pescatori, or Island of the Fishermen; but it is much the most picturesque of the three. A crowd of brown, quaint roofs, with green trees by them, and a church spire rising above all, give a beautiful outline and constrast of tints to this poor man's island. Perhaps it is best to pass by, and admire it from a distance. The charm of many of these exquisite bits of Italian village scenery is wholly swallowed up and eclipsed by the stench which greets you on exploring them. There are places which you enter full of romantic enthusiasm, and escape from with a shudder. Instead of raising your hands in admiration, you employ them in holding your nose. Pheughough feagh! Hrrrr-r—r-r—ugh! Bah! Oh! I am glad we didn't land at the Isola dei Pescatori. But perhaps it is sweet.

From Baveno you may go up the lake, and then to Lugano by Bellinzona, over the Monte Cenere, or by Luino. By the former route you see the scenery from one end of the lake to the other, and get into the St. Gothard road. By the other you have a three hours' drive by Ponte Tresa. I have been by both, and I think would advise the route from Baveno to Lugano by Luino, much rather than by Bellinzona; *i. e.*, if the tourist have come over the Simplon. In this case he will go by

Luino into Swiss territory again at Lugano, the principal place of the canton Ticino; then he will pay a visit to Como, *viâ* Porlezza, and come back by Orta and Varallo, getting thus into the Val Anzasca. This is the regular round, and a very easy one. But he ought, on returning from Como, to come back to Baveno once more, and go over the Monte Motterone, which is called the Righi of the Italian side of the Alps, to Orta. This is the route we took, and I would advise no one to miss the views which it involves. He can visit the specialities of Lago Maggiore either on his first or second visit to Baveno; but I should choose the first for this purpose, and then, using the excellent inn at Baveno only as a resting-place for the night, look down on the lake from the Motterone on his return into Switzerland proper by Orta and Varallo.

There is regular communication between Baveno and Lugano. It was dark when we reached the latter place, and were lodged in front rooms of the "Hôtel du Parc," which gave us in the morning views down two branches of this winding and lovely lake. The hotel was a monastery a few years ago; but the thrifty Swiss find tourists pay them better than monks. So the latter are suppressed: even the bells of their church, which adjoins the hotel, are not allowed to be rung very

early in the morning, out of regard for the guests, who would start up in their beds at the brazen clamour from the tower, which forms part of the same building as that in which they sleep.

"Why are these bells quiet," I asked of an old woman outside in the morning, "when all the rest in the town jangle off at six o'clock?"

"Oh," she replied, with Italian grimace, "think of the Signors and Signorinas;" and then she laid her cheek on her hand, and closed her eyes, to signify the consideration in which they, or their purses, were held. It is ill to wake a sleeping "Milord."

VI.—LUGANO TO BELLAGIO.

WE were now in Switzerland again, though everything about the place proclaimed it to be in Italy. The inn, which I have told you had but lately been a monastery, rambles and stretches itself over so great an extent of ground, that some people might almost get up an appetite for dinner by walking from their rooms to the *salle à manger*. This last is an immense apartment, with hard, cool floor, lofty ceiling, and windows screened during the glare of the day against the sunshine, which lies beyond the sharp-edged shadows in still, white heat. From the *salle à manger* you pass

through a reading-room into a saloon, The latter has windows open to the ground, so that you may step out and stroll about the garden under the terraced vines and the strong-leaved fig-trees. Higher up there is a deeply-shaded walk, from which you have fine views over the lake. The lower part of the garden is laid out with flowers, gravel walks, and grass. These never show to advantage in Italy: the growth of vegetation is too rapid and rank. The grass is coarse and the flowers are stalky. This flower-garden of the "Hôtel du Parc" is well meant, but too gritty and hot, though a central fountain squirts its best throughout the day.

Everywhere, in the shrubberies, in the corners, among the tree-branches, across unfrequented paths, high and low, you are sure to see enormous cob-webs. In the middle of each, with a fulness of flesh which shows that he is not starved by over-crowding, sits a monstrous spider. Your English spiders are nothing to the Italian. These last are more terrible, more greedy, and very much bigger than our own. Squatting in the centre of their webs, high among the outer branches of a tree, they show like nuts against the sky. There were several which I watched for hours outside the windows of our inn. One especially I think I should know again. Let me record his way of

doing business, as a specimen of spider life in Italy. His web was three or four feet across, though some of the larger ropes which stretched it were carried to a still greater distance. He sat in the middle, holding the principal spokes of his wheel-like net in his hands. Every now and then he gave them a little shake, as if to feel whether anything had alighted upon them, just as a deep-sea fisher raises his line a bit to make certain about a nibble. When a luckless fly got entangled a slight spasm of expectation went through the central monster, who paused for a moment to make sure that the visitor was fairly limed. Then, quitting his seat, he rushed upon the spinning, screaming captive, and seized him with penetrating gripe behind the wings. Then there was a shriller cry from the victim, which died down to a dull buzz as his heart's blood was sucked out by the monster. Alas, poor fly! you dangle lifeless from the web, a winged but empty carcass. Then the ogre flung him down, throwing his fragments away as a monkey does the shells of the nut he has eaten, and walked quietly back to his watch-post, a trifle fuller, but still keen for the next meal.

When this had been repeated two or three times I could restrain my indignation no longer. It may be foolish and sentimental to feel for flies;

but the terror and pain of those I had just seen eaten alive made me ask myself whether I could not assist in bringing on the nemesis which I thought must follow such wanton gluttony. Just then a hornet came sailing by, and I fetched him such a smack with an odd volume of 'Vanity Fair,' which I had brought out of the reading-room, that he lay as good as dead upon the gravel —a large, lusty, yellow-banded, evil-countenanced hornet. I laid hold of him by the tip of his left wing, and pitched him right into the web. Ho! ho! my ogre of a spider! this is another affair altogether. Up he jumped, and made cautiously towards the new comer. He didn't meddle with him, though, thinking he was alive, but sidled round him with all his wits at his fingers' ends. He looked puzzled. The captive was as big as himself. How came he there? His wings moved: was he shamming? Why didn't he break away? The hornet showing signs of recovery, I laid my book down, and looked out for a contest on more even terms than the ogre, probably, desired. But he was equal to the occasion. He walked slowly round the dangling hornet, with a rope extemporized out of his own tenacious inside, until its wings were fairly tied down and the beast made fast hand and foot. Then he fell upon him open-mouthed, and had a rich and copious treat from

the artery beneath his wing. When I left he had ceased sucking, and, with a satisfied air about his face, was tugging the still valuable corpse away, against supper-time.

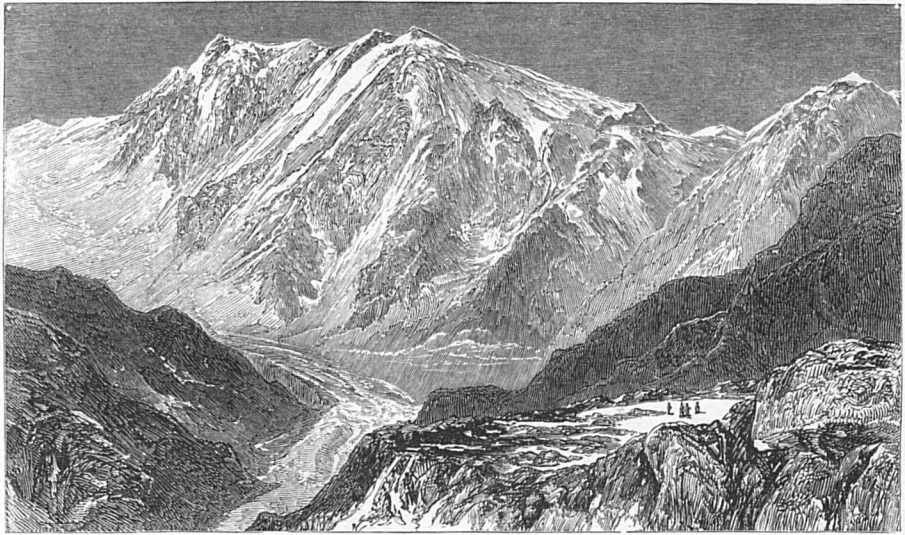
The poor flies have small chance here. Certainly the sun warms them pleasantly enough, and, I dare say, expedites their multiplication; but besides the spiders, they have enemies in the lizards, which dart upon them as they sit toasting themselves on the hot stones. Pretty little lizards, I see you at this moment; now bustling along in the bright sunshine; now suddenly rigid, with no sign of life but the twinkle of your bright eye and the quick beating of your lungs or heart, whichever it is, plainly seen beneath your arm-pits. I caught one of these small fellows; he was terribly frightened, but presented a most ludicrous appearance when he got his arms clear, and pushed as hard as he could against my hand, trying to shove my encircling finger down, or to draw the rest of his body up, just like Gulliver climbing out of the Brobdignag marrow-bone, or rather, perhaps, as if he were trying to get a tight pair of leather breeches off. Sometimes, they say, these lizards, being hard pressed, will leave their tails behind them. I never saw one thus dismember himself, but I noticed many with very stumpy ends, like Manx cats.

I must go back to spiders for a minute. One night—so somebody told the story to an old lady, whose nerves all stood on end perceptibly by the time he had done—one moonlight night I woke about three in the morning, and saw the shadow of a tall, thin spider, about as large as the frame of an umbrella, creep down the wall of the room towards the head of my bed. I sprang up just as he reached and caught at me. In the struggle which ensued I fortunately got hold of a large towel, which I flung over him, and by the aid of which I dragged him to the window and flung him into the street. But, positively, the biggest, strongest spider I ever met did come into my bedroom by moonlight, and did carry away with him a cambric pocket-hankerchief, in which, after some diplomacy and resistance, I captured him.

And what has this to do with touring in Switzerland? Well, when you get over the Alps, down into the hot valleys, and sit under the trees by the clear lake side, you will notice and remember the spiders and the lizards. In giving you my impressions I cannot leave out these. They are part of the scenery. And so are the fish. There is a "dependence" or offshoot of the "Hôtel du Parc," called the "Belvidere," just on the edge of the lake, about two minutes' walk from the inn. Here the fish may be seen swimming about in hundreds;

and I spent the greater part of one lazy morning at Lugano in throwing to them pieces of bread, which they circled around suspiciously for a minute, and then fought for with much gobble and splash. But about Lugano. I tell you, you have now come into the listless, lounging, Italian air; and though you are still in Switzerland, you cannot expect me to trudge with you over the pass and up the mountain-side. It is too hot, and I won't have it. Stay; there is one mountain, St. Salvatore, close to Lugano, and we will make a compromise by ascending that. Its summit is only some hour and a half from the inn door, and yet, though the view from it is one of the most striking in the Subalpine district, there is but a miserable path up its side.

It is crowned with a church and a house, both deserted. I went up a way of my own, making straight for this church from the high road below; but I would not advise ladies to attempt the direct approach. I had to climb ever so far by hand and foot, occasionally coming to some very steep places indeed, and getting very hot for my pains. My way lay through the high, strong brushwood which clothes most of the mountain, and from whence I could see nothing, being obliged to follow the rise of the hill-side, sometimes even scrambling up among the branches as if I were



THE PRECIPICES OF MONTE ROSA, FROM THE MONTE MORO PASS.

climbing a tree. At last, however, I came out close to the summit, and saw the house and chapel which top it a few yards above me. Having reached these, I sat down on a low wall and looked at what I think is one of the most beautiful views I ever saw.

Far below lay the deep blue lake, wrapping its arms around the mountain on which I stood, and stretching away into long winding bays among the hills, which shut it in on every side. A few boats crept like tiny insects on its dark, polished surface. Before me in the distance were the peaks of the mountains around the Lake of Como, on my right those about Lago Maggiore; while farther off, over my shoulder, rose the cliffs and snows of Monte Rosa and its attendant giants. Behind me lay the Monte Cenere; and everywhere, fringing the water, and creeping up the hill-sides among the vines, figs, and mulberry-trees, were sharp-cut villages, like little slices of towns, almost every one with its church and campanile or bell-tower. I counted about eighty. The hum of many chimes came up with the hour of noon. The ringing in these Italian churches appears incessant. One seems to set another off like barking dogs, until the whole country-side is in a jangle.

The great number of villages here is very remarkable: they reminded me of those you see in

the background of the old Italian painters, portions of "clear walled cities." They are very striking to the eye at a distance, and to the nose when near. Anything like the acuteness and body of the stenches they generate I have never yet encountered.

When I had rested myself, and looked my fill at the view from the summit, I thought I would try the house there for refreshment; but there was nobody within. I halloed, threw pebbles into the open windows, battered at the door with a large stone, and not a sound could I get in reply but echo. There was not so much as a cat on the premises. So I came down, this time by the path, which is very rough, but commands beautiful views.

There are several very interesting walks to be taken from Lugano. One to Carona, along the ridge in which Salvatore stands, and down to Melide, gives much the same view as from Salvatore itself, though less extensive. It is perfectly easy, and it took us, at a quiet space, a little more than three hours to return to Lugano. One speciality of the walk is the beauty of the lake glimpses which you get under the chesnut-trees. These last are fine and numerous: they provide much of the food of the poor people, their fruit being eaten boiled as well as roasted, in large

quantities, not as dessert, but as the main portion of the meal. You should also take a walk to Brè, from whence there is a fine view of Monte Rosa. In all your strolls you will see or come upon the lake: it is the most tortuous piece of water I ever knew, wriggling about in quite unexpected places, its outline on the map being something like that of a lizard which had died of stomach-ache.

If you can take only two walks during your stay at Lugano, let me advise you to ascend Salvatore, and visit the monastery of Bigorio, which is about eight or ten miles east of the town. This is one of the monasteries not yet suppressed, and contains eight monks, who mourn over their fallen estate. They are very hospitable, however, as far as their means go, and will talk with you by the hour together. We visited them one very hot day. Leaving the bustle of the crowded, fashionable inn at Lugano, with its kid gloves, crinoline, and French cookery, it was like stepping back some hundreds of years to sit down at the table in the cool refectory, with the quaint old belongings of the monastery about us, and chat with the bearded, hooded fathers over their home-made wine.

We walked leisurely through many villages to the hill on which the monastery stands. On our way we got some luncheon, not at an inn, but at a little village shop, and sat down in the shade on

a great stone outside the door, to dispose of it. A parcel of sunburnt bare-legged children gathered round us to stare; for a stranger was a sight in the place. Presently, being refreshed, we walked on in our shirt-sleeves, till we hit upon the place we sought. A long path led up to it, skirted by stations or little chapels, each with a rude Scripture fresco on its face. On reaching the monastery gate we could see and hear no one. The view behind us was lovely, and the silence of the old building in keeping with the utter stillness of the air. The gate bell seemed to ring with almost impertinent loudness when we pulled the handle; but not a dog barked nor door slammed. Presently, however, there was a shuffle inside, then a scraping back of bolts, and a weakly, toothless old monk let us in. He had not much to show, as sights are generally estimated; but there was a homely charm about the dull old place which pleased me well. The old man led us to the chapel, with childlike pride in the poor ornaments it possessed, and then took us into the refectory or dining-room, where some boiled chesnuts and horn spoons were put out for dinner. It was a genuine scanty-looking business. However, he brought some pears, bread and cheese, thin wine, and two or three other monks, who plunged at once into theology and politics, while we munched

our food. One of them asked me eagerly whether we thought much of our Queen's mother having been a Roman Catholic, and when I questioned the fact, took a surprising pinch of snuff at my ignorance or self-deception. Then we strayed back to the battle of Waterloo, his views of which were taken altogether from the French side. Then another let out at Victor Emmanuel, and they gave us a chorus of grievances, which we received with such expression of sympathy as became their guests. I am at a loss to know, however, of what use these brethren are. The country, is in fact, over-churched: there are more priests than can get a comfortable living. I saw some, poor to a degree of shabbiness which we can hardly associate with the station of any minister of religion. These men, too, were walking about Lugano on market-day, when they might be supposed to have on their best or decent clothes; but I am sure I saw clerical suits on them which altogether would not fetch more than half-a-crown in Rag Fair.

When we were cooled and rested we walked home by another and still lovelier way, holding high talk of the influences which were gradually clearing Italy of the overplus of priestcraft by which it has so long been hampered. Even here, in Lugano, under free Swiss rule, with universal suffrage and liberal institutions, there are twelve

churches, several of them capable of containing a large multitude, to a population of between 8000 and 9000 at the utmost.

The people seem industrious, there being many vineyards in the neighbourhood, and much silk grown. A little way out of the town, on the Capo di Lago road, the unwinding of silk from the cocoons is carried on in a large building erected for the purpose. The work is done by girls and women, who often sing in parts while they are engaged at it. The unlucky cocoons are killed by being dipped into scalding water; then their shrouds are wound off. The produce of the vineyards can be seen in some natural cellars in the hills opposite Lugano. They, or rather the entrances to them, look like a village on the edge of the lake. We rowed across one day, and found the whole place smelling like a bunghole, so crammed was it with wine.

Lugano itself is a fairly industrious town, though far behind in mechanical appliances. The distaff and spindle have not yet been superseded even by the old-fashioned spinning-wheel: thread is still spun with the finger and thumb. All trades flourish in the street. Hatters, carpenters, shoemakers, ply their craft in the open air. The shops are half stalls. But of all the goods commend me to the fruit. Coming from the cold Aeggischorn, this was

like a descent into the tropics. Grapes! figs! figs! with bursting ripe sides and dewdrops of sweet fluid in their dimples—the thought of you—how many for twopence?—might make the mouth of an epicure water.

On market-day, which fell while we were there the town was crammed. Boats came as to a focus from all parts of the lake. Carts, drawn by tough, patient oxen, waddled slowly along the streets. Pigs, speaking the universal language of complaint, resisted guidance and conversion into pork. Swarthy-faced, earringed peasants, brought in their eggs and butter, buying the finery and comforts of Lugano in return, often sitting on the edges of their boats to inspect their purchases before shoving off on their way home. Meanwhile, from all, the jabber of Italian tongues multiplied the crowd threefold to the ear.

And yet all was Swiss. There were no obstrusive *gendarmes*. There were no soldiers, unless I except a military school, which made a display one morning we were there. They fired into the air, marched, played "God save the Queen," and then, dispersing for a few hours, crowded the pastry-cooks' and toffee shops. We cannot associate children with stocks and full military uniform, or imagine a squad piling arms and then buying an old woman's whole trayful of lollipops.

These were the only soldiers we saw. Every Swiss, however, is liable to be drawn for service, the army consisting of militia. There is also proof of Swiss liberty here in the number of Italian refugees, who seek safety in the canton of Ticino. Lugano is close upon the frontier. From the window of our room we looked across the lake upon a really Italian town. Directly, therefore, a neighbouring "patriot" makes his own place too hot for him, he has only to skip over the border, and is secure from apprehension. After the battle of Aspromonte there was a sudden influx of these gentlemen; some honest, with genuine bitterness of disappointment; others no better than scamps, mere adventurers, who disliked being shot.

It is curious to observe the features of social division among the Swiss. Romanists and Protestants are not mingled evenly up as with us. They come in lumps. Here, too are no mountain "jodels," no alpenstocks, and energetic atmosphere of mountaineering, though there are mountains in plenty. It seems as if, when once you have crossed the great range, though you may enter most striking scenery, you are not expected to climb. There are mountains in the neighbourhood of the lakes with panoramas of rare and noble beauty, but they are seldom visited. To some the absence of guides and paths may be a recommendation; but

the spirit of enterprise soon forsakes most of those who are keen for excursive discovery when they first come over to the south side of the Alps. We intended to have ascended Monte Generoso; but somehow, what with the ripe figs, and the soft air, and the sunshine, and the interest, we took after breakfast in the spiders, the lizards, and the fish, the resolution died away, and I can only tell you that the view from Monte Generoso has been called the finest of its kind in Europe.

Two or three times a day a paddle steamer touches at Lugano, breaking the reflections of the hills in the water, and leaving a double wave of wake behind it, which flaps against the opposite shores, and grates the idle boats gently against the beach. It circumnavigates the lake from morning till evening, ringing its bell and blowing its whistle at each in the round of statious, with tiresome punctuality. It is very convenient no doubt, but it takes away much from the quiet loveliness of the scenery. You sit dreamily eating grapes in the shade, and forgetting that you are in Switzerland, when this fussy steamer bustles round a corner with a line of dirty smoke behind it, in vulgar contrast to the white-sailed, classic-shaped boats which creep from village to village with bold scroll patterns painted on their sides, and choruses of song from their simple crews. I believe that

the boats on this lake inherit the form in use among the old Romans; they are steered with an oar and rudder-bands; and it requires no imagination to believe that in such as these Pliny sat when he sailed along the shores of Como. However, we used the steamer to go to Porlezza, a small town at the end of one of the lake's arms, and the "port" for those on their way to Como. We took our last walk about the narrow streets of Lugano, and were soon deposited at Porlezza.

Here our small matter of luggage was glanced at by an Itallian custom-house officer, and we got a little one-horse carriage to take us to Menaggio, a "port" on the lake of Como, which we reached in an hour and a half. From this we rowed across to Bellagio, at the tip of the tongue or promontory which divides the lake into two long legs.

The day was still, and the water as flat as this paper on which I write. Another boat gave chase to us, or rather tried to pass us, on our way to the "Grande Bretagne" hotel, for which we steered. This eagerness led us to suspect the inn was full; ss we pushed smartly on, and landed first, just in time to secure the only room in the place, and cutting out our rivals by about a minute and a half.

VII.—BELLAGIO TO MACUGNAGA.

IF it was dificult to walk at Lugano, what were we to do here at Bellagio, still farther south, where the pleasures of indolence grew quite irresistible? Here was the lake, before and behind: here the figs and grapes were cheaper, richer, riper, than ever. What were we to do? I may as well make a clean breast of it at once, and, with a consciousness that I am a fairly representative tourist, confess that I let my sinews relax, and, lying under the canopy of a boat with friends and fruit around me, was gently propelled about by a chattering Italian, passing and repassing continually all the other guests in the hotel at which we stopped. Vehement mountaineers yield to the charms of Como, in spite of their Alpine-made vows. You hear a man talking about some excursion: he is going up such and such a mountain. Ah, well, you may be pretty sure that he won't. Probably you will see him in the course of the day with his hat tilted over his eyes, and his hob-nailed high-lows up on the seat of a boat, while his strong back rests upon a pile of its cushions. He talks about going ever so far for a bathe—not he; for a row—not an oar will he touch; but he will eat figs, and get himself out of condition, till his

programe, his conscience, or his purse, sends him back again to the hills.

We made, however, a little excursion from Bellagio. You are almost obliged to make it. No one will let you enjoy the repose of the place till you are able to say that you have visited the villa Serbelloni. This is at the very tip of the promontory of Bellagio; and there is no use denying that it is a lovely spot. The views from its gardens, walks, and shrubberies, combine everything which you can imagiue for the perfection of a romantic and luxurious abode. The deep, clear blue water flaps gently around the rocks, Vistas of sunny, distant hills and valleys open out from beneath the shade, and through gaps in the aloe, the olive and the cactus. Purple mountains and white snow-peaks show themselves from among the branches of the orange-tree. But, pah! it is impossible to arrive at the true sensations which such a villa is calculated to arouse, by a mere flying visit of a few hours, or even the sojourn of a day. You ought to dream away a week in order to take in the influences of one of the loveliest spots in the centre of Italy's loveliest lake. We were, of course, walked through in the custody of a horticultural turnkey, and read little printed notices that we were not to go there, not to touch this, not to misconduct ourselves in any way. The exhibitor was civil enough,

and the owners of the property are very kind in allowing the gardens of their villa to be opened to strangers; but the being taken through such a place is very much like being shown a good dinner. You think how those must enjoy it who are privileged to sit down and take it in.

After the villa we had another lazy cruise around the promontory. We told our boatman to row slowly, and listened to the plash of our wake, as it slapped the broken, upright walls of rock, which rose sheer out of the deep, still water. Meanwhile, our man talked politics. He was a laughing, grumbling, sensual specimen of the common Italian, and it took very little persuasion to get from him all he knew and felt about the comparative merits of Austrian and Italian government. "I should like to see the Austrians back," he said: "they let us fish as often as we pleased." Now it seems the fishery was getting ruined, and it was needful, in order to preserve the future bread of many, to have some "close" times. These Victor Emmanuel insists upon; wherefore our boatman complained. "I am," said he, "an Italian, a true Italian, and yet I would gladly see the Austrians back; then poor men could fish when they pleased." Ay, so it is; your vulgar patriot will consent to no sacrifice for future benefit. Unless the hero can at once give him plenty of meat and drink, his hero-

ism is soon questioned. "Ah!" said our fisherman, "if Garibaldi were king now!" and then he smacked his lips.

Poor Garabaldi! I believe that you would try to make the people respect themselves and work; but they had much rather not work: they had rather lie in the sun and catch fleas. You would break up the bulk of monkery: the monks have done their work. Once they led the way in farming, building, learning; now they have lost their place. They are not wanted. Garibaldi would get rid of them, or make them useful; but they are popular, the chatty, snuffy old monks, with their jokes and their double chins; and no immediate thanks would come from the people to him who would make them all pull long faces, and increase the supply in the labour-market. Garibaldi would try and make men honest and self-denying, like himself; but they would rather tell lies and save themselves trouble. The Como man was a specimen: he reminded me of that class among British voters whose sole test of political ability is beer. A plague on your patriotism: give us a pot of porter.

"Ah!" said our man, "if Garibaldi were king, we should all prosper then; we should all get what we want then. Ah!" he added after a pause, "I can drink twenty glasses of wine myself, at one sitting."

We tried to show him the fallacy of his reasonings; but as he was obstinate, and we but imperfect masters of Italian, our words went the way of most of the good advice given in the world.

We intended to have left that evening by the steamer for Como, on our way back; but a storm came on, which hindered the boat from calling at the place. After a lovely day there grew up a pile of angry-looking clouds, which we watched with growing interest from the windows of our inn. The surface of the lake, which had been as flat as the terrace on which we walked by its side, was now blown into capricious and uncertain streaks; the wind coming down like a besom in the hand of an invisible giant, who swept it hither and thither, till he made up his mind which way to brush the storm. Then came the flash, which shone bright even in the evening sunset, and the thunder gave a warning distant roar.

Hitherto the flowers in the garden had stood up, or clung upon their stalks in brilliant safety. There had been no heavy gale that autumn. A flagstaff was stuck in the gardens of the hotel. jaunty and stiff, though the bunting flapped around it in fretful prescience. Next morning there was not a flower left; the garden was flattened as if by a roller; the flagstaff was bent down like a reed, and the flag was split. Billows rolled in from the

lake, and pitched themselves with foam and curl upon the garden beach. The steamer heaved, and the boat which went out to reach it tossed and crashed down upon the waves with a buoyancy that would have made an emperor sick.

The storm of thunder and lightning which accompanied this change was long and loud. It began in the daylight, and went on far into the dark. Till then I never really heard the wind howl. Now here it not only stroked the trees flat, so it seemed; it not only roared in the chimneys, shrieked in the shutters and the ill-fitting foreign window-frames, but it howled as it hurried over the white-foamed lake in mad, unfettered rage.

Next morning we went with divers tourists and great piles of baggage to the Como steamer. Our fellow-passengers were full of the storm. Many wore great coats. The weather was no longer sultry, at least not for a day or two; the lower hills were powdered with snow; and the wind was fresh, if not keen. We forgot in a moment all the temptation to be in the shade, or easy-rocking pleasure-boat, with a heap of figs and sweet grapes before us. The enervating luxuriousness of Como was suspended. We tied strings to our hats, and breathed a freer and more invigorating air.

The scenery of the banks of Como is supposed to derive much of its interest from the villas which

fringe it. I must say, however, that they are to my eye anything but pleasing. There is a rank, gritty look about them, or they are ornamented in outrageous taste. What with colour, statues, terraces, and the conventional circumstances of the villa, there remained nothing to recommend most of them but their name and situation. This last, indeed, saves the reputation of many an ugly edifice.

There is nothing very striking in the town of Como itself. The Cathedral and Town-hall are well worth a visit. The walls of the houses are favourite vehicles of political enthusiasm.

While we were waiting for the omnibus to take us to the railway station, which is at Camerlata, two miles outside and above the town, I was drawn to see the drill of some recruits. It was the noisest thing of the kind I ever witnessed. Each man in the squad repeated the words of command as he obeyed them. "Shoulder arms!" cried the instructor. "Shoulder arms!" cried the men before him in chorus as they did it. There were some dozen squads at exercise; and if the Italian army makes as much proportionate sound when it goes into action, it will indeed make a noise in Europe.

Presently the omnibus was ready, and we drove to the station. We were about returning to the Alps by the Lake of Orta and the Val Anzasca, and

had two ways to choose—by Arona or through Lugano. We preferred the latter, as it gave us a fresh drive. We took, however, a flying glance at Milan, which is the cleanest Italian town I ever saw, with a strong French and English atmosphere. The police reminded us of Great Marlborough Street, and the houses, fashions, etc., of Paris. I feel this is an inch or two out of the "Regular Swiss Round," and will not, therefore, dwell upon it. I must say, however, that it might be included in the spots for Swiss scenery; for the view from the spire of the cathedral was one of the most wonderful I ever saw. The air had been marvellously cleared by the last storm, so marvellously that even the stale show-man, who took his fee and went up the winding stairs to point out the panorama, was himself warmed into enthusiasm. We saw the Alps from Mont Blanc to the Orteler Spitz, in the Tyrol, sharp, white, and clear against the blue horizon.

But about our return. We drove from Como to Capo di Lago, a village at the tip of one of the arms of Lugano, where we picked up the steamer, and sleeping a night at the "Hôtel du Parc," went by 'bus and boat back to Baveno.

The drive to Capo di Lago was very beautiful. There came on another meteorological result of the Como tempest, in the shape of a brilliant orange

and purple sunset, which turned the peaks of Monte Generoso, under which we drove, into gorgeous metal. Monte Rosa stood by us on our left, its outline standing out clean upon the rich evening sky.

We saw, too, by this route, another phase of both Lugano and Maggiore beauty. My enjoyment of the sunset, on our way to the former place, was rather marred by the criticisms on England uttered by a foreign fellow-traveller outside the diligence. After contrasting and comparing the two countries, he rested finally on the difference between their drinks. "Ho!" he said, "but you has admirable, what you call it, stowt. Oh, ho, ha! it was goot. Ho, si!" Then he sat still and chewed the cud of his lively liquorish remembrances.

The drive from Lugano to Luino takes about three hours. It is in parts very beautiful, and shows more features of the tortuous lake. From above Luino there is a fine view of the Alps over Maggiore. At Baveno we rested in the same inn as before, and tried to make arrangements for our walk to Orta over Motterone on the following day. One of our party was obliged to ride; we had therefore to provide a horse or mule. There was none to be had. "But," said the waiter, "we have excellent asses;" indeed, there was one man

with an ass which would carry anything. So the next morning we ordered the ass. "In ten minutes it will be here," replied its owner; and we waited an hour and a half. When it came it certainly was big; but the thin-legged, small-faced guide who conducted it had not spirits enough for his duty. To drive an ass you must be imperative, if not exacting. Now, our man was no better than a mere suppliant to his animal. He abjured it by saints in and out of the calender. "Oh ass!" he cried—but I cannot translate his epithets. One of the most frequent might be rendered thus: "O ass! ass! with the soul of a sluggard!" For this he received nothing but tough, sullen remonstrance, which came to a crisis once under a Spanish chestnut-tree, when the animal flapped its ears decisively, and prepared to lie down. This acted proposal on the ass's part being wholly unaccompanied by signs of fatigue, our conductor thrashed it silently. Then we came to an understanding which no moral influence had promised, and got steadily through our work.

The route up the Motterone from Baveno lies at first through a number of gardens, with paths leading off in all directions. Hence, a guide is needed. When we emerged from them we got upon meadows and grass slopes. The views from this mountain, which is called the Italian Righi, are

exceedingly beautiful. It looks down upon the Lakes of Maggiore and Orta, and commands the huge masses of Monte Rosa. By all means cross it when you visit Baveno.

The road is good enough; but, strange to say, there is no inn upon the route. The walk takes from seven to eight hours, and is well known; but you cannot, or at least we could not, get even a piece of bread by the way. There is a house near the top, where our guide said we could lunch. When we reached it we tied the ass to a rail and knocked at the door. Out came two villanous-looking men, and stared. Had they any bread? No. Meat? No. Wine? No. But they had some cream. So they brought a great bowl of it; and capital it was. We paid some ridiculously small sum for a supply which would have set up a London dairyman for a week, and then jogged on.

The descent into Orta was through many vineyards. These, which are poetical and picturesque enough on paper, are suggestive of much wearisome toil and dull monotony when seen in reality. The vine, like the fig-tree, requires the husbandman to dig about and dung it; and, as it is generally grown upon a slope, this labour is proportionably increased. The labourers in the vineyards we passed showed signs of the burden and heat of the day. One of the worst is, they are so tired

when the hour of release comes, that they are generally disinclined to clean themselves; and next morning they lie till they are obliged to go to work, and it is too late to wash. Hence, the tan of the sun upon their skins is deepened by an astonishing accumulation of dirt, and their clothes are often hideously foul.

Here let me notice—for something brought it close to me in this walk—the large number of wayside chapels you meet directly you get over into Italy. Far be it from any Christian to deride the religious rights of any, much less of those who use the same Lord's Prayer as ourselves; but we were continually struck with the irreverence and indecency of these rude little wayside buildings. It was not that they were roughly built—for the greatest simplicity in structure may accompany the deepest devotion—but they were in many cases mere vehicles of irreverence. They were scribbled all over with names, and worse than names. Moreover, as they frequently contained a number of skulls—such being the custom here—the constrast between the writing on the wall and the ghastly eyeless stare from within haunted me with a sense of religious incongruity which sometimes was very distressing. The perpetual presence of these skulls tends, I believe, to have a deadening effect upon those who see them. There

they stood, in rows, and tiers, and heaps, looking out with bony, vacant face upon the lovely valleys, hills, and lakes, from behind the iron bars of the wayside chapels. Once they had danced and sung in the soft Italian evening; once they had chattered at the village corner; once they had bent over the vine, or beneath the load of gathered grapes; and now they are unburied—set up there in staring, dumb, death-like wakefulness, while the living skulls go to and fro. And how like they were! It is not clothing, but utter bareness, which shows our resemblance to each other. No uniform like the inner suit, the skeleton we wear beneath the rags and bravery of life.

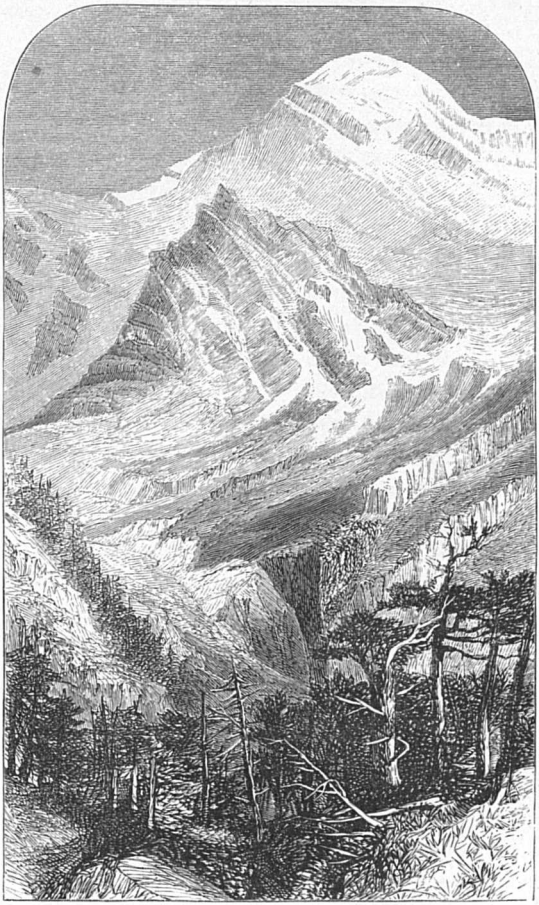
The sun was setting, and the bells rang out for evening prayer, while we descended into Orta. The view was very beautiful; but we hurried on, for we had started late, and wanted to reach our inn before it grew quite dark.

Orta is a cheerful, picturesque place, with many signs of industry about it. Our inn stood upon the lake, and produced the most curiously vile tea I ever tasted in my life. There is only one very noticeable sight in the town, and that is the Monte Sacro, which we did not visit. It is in some respects inferior to that of Varallo, which most tourists go to see, and which is within an easy day's journey of Orta. You can read all about both in

the guide-books. True, we intended to have visited them; but a heavy down-pour of rain coming on, we cut this corner off our tour, and drove straight from the town of Orta, by the lake-side, towards Omegna, and so towards the Val Anzasca.

Leaving Omegna, we also left the rain, which was local, and got once more into the great Simplon road, turning off some way short of Domo, to Pie di Mulera, a town, or village, at the entrance of the valley we proposed ascending.

The coolness given to the air by the late storm had now passed away, and we found the road white hot. Immediately from Pie di Mulera, however, we began to ascend, and were struck with the extreme beauty of the famous Val Anzasca. Rocks, timber, and turf, are exquisitely combined. Here, too, the timber is no mere brushwood, but fine trees of beech and chesnut, which lodge upon the terraces, or cluster where deeper soil has accumulated beneath a crumbling cliff, or been brought down by a mountain stream. Here, too, were smooth slopes and knolls of grass, and hollows of lawn, which seemed from their very shape to give sympathetic rest to the round eye. But perhaps what struck us most was the colour of the river-bed, which everywhere marked the bottom of the valley, and was now nearly dry, a few thin threads of water only creeping along where the torrent



THE CIMA DI JAZI, HEAD OF THE VAL ANZASCA.

roars in spring, or even rises after a few hours of heavy rain. Generally a bare river-bed has a dreary barren look. Here, however, it added to and harmonized with the rest of the landscape. I never saw softer nor more beautifully grouped colours than in the stones of the Val Anzasca. Yellow, brown, and green, they lay in rich confusion, contrasting happily with the surrounding lawns, and cliffs, and lanes, while the colours blended softly with each other.

Meanwhile, right down the valley, with edge clear cut against the sky, look the bright white snows of Monte Rosa. We passed divers villages, of which the people seemed industrious and thriving. I noticed here, too, several local fashions in dress which went quite out of the Swiss cycle of clothes. In one place all the women seemed to wear frills. Their houses were clean, and the villages, as far as we could judge from the mere carriage of our noses through them, sweet.

We drove in a little *char* to Ponte Grande, where we lunched, and waited for another storm to pass. Here we picked up a porter, who had just come down with the luggage of three gentlemen from Macugnaga. Could he take our things back? Could he? Pooh! he was as fresh as a bird, and when we had lunched hopped off with our three knapsacks, and two or three parcels of his own, as

if they were bubbles on his back. He was not a big man, but the sinews of his leg looked like those about the hock of a horse. He had not a quarter of an ounce of fat about him.

But even he felt the walk from Ponte Grande to Macugnaga. A slight storm had failed to clear the air, and so the great sun looked full down into the valley, steaming with cloud fragments, which hung motionless about the tops of the neighbouring mountains. There was not a breath to stir a leaf. We walked easily enough; and yet the heat —no, not the heat, for the thermometer would not have justified us in taxing that with excess, but something meteorological, seemed to choke us. We dawdled. Our guide dawdled. We all sat down two or three times, and it was quite dark when we reached Macugnaga. Then, however, the moon shone grandly out, and showed us how we were lodged at the foot of the huge precipices which come down from the snows of Monte Rosa.

VIII.—MACUGNAGA TO BEX.

Now the weather changed again. We had a spell of autumn summer before we got home; but here was a parenthesis of cloud and rain. Monte Rosa showed from foot to head in the moonlight, soon after we reached Macugnaga; but the next

day, when we crossed the Moro Pass, it looked out only through openings in the clouds, and when we got to Saas the rain came down without a pause for a long twenty-four hours. But more of this presently.

Macugnaga is set in the midst of some wonderful scenery, which demands several hours' walk or ride to show its most striking features. The village looks as if it were at the bottom of everything, as all the views from it may be said to be upward; but in reality it is some 5000 feet above the level of the sea,—*i. e.*, much above the top of Snowdon. Still, if any place is likely to make the nape of your neck ache from bending the head back and staring up, it is probably Macugnaga and its surroundings. The cliffs of Monte Rosa are tremendous. When seen from the Gornergrat, this mountain, with its approaches, except the last 500 feet of the top, is covered with snow. The view of it from the Macugnaga side is wholly different. You can hardly believe it to be the same place. At Zermatt you are behind the scenes. The front of the mountain looks towards Italy. It backs up against Switzerland, its shoulders being covered with snow, and its great stone face commanding the plains beyond Milan and challenging the distant Apennines. In many places the snow curls over the rock precipice, and makes a white cornice

to the wall which bounds one part of the Macugnaga valley. We would gladly have spent some days here; but as our time was getting short, and our wives were all this while prisoners at the Bel Alp (where, by the way, they enjoyed themselves immensely), we made up our minds to go on to Saas the next day, by the Monte Moro.

Having completed arrangements with a couple of porters to start early the next morning, we strolled about outside the little inn, by the door of which the landlord placed a candle, as if to illuminate our exercise ground and show off the view. I think a solitary glim looks smaller and more impotent out of doors at night, when there are huge masses of black mountain scenery around, than it does in any other position. This showed a little dim-edged circle of light on the rough-cast inn wall, and an occasional moth hurrying itself to a brilliant but painful end.

We started at six the next morning for the Monte Moro pass, the top of which we reached in five minutes under the three hours. This was quick walking; but we were in good trim, and mounted briskly. The path is steep, and in some few places involves a short scramble; but it is by no means difficult. The views behind, as you ascend, are magnificent. On a clear day I cannot imagine any much grander. On this occasion,

however, the jealous clouds came down, and gave us only a few peeps at the precipices of Monte Rosa, through openings in the mist. Seen thus across the basin in which Macugnaga lies, the solid structure of the rock cliffs appeared with marked strength, in contrast to the soft cloud which shut off their head and feet. The mighty wall might have reached beyond our sight, both above and below. Veiled grandeur tempts the imagination to exaggerate: perhaps we should not have received so vast an impression of the surroundings of the place had the sky been clear. As we approached the summit the view became more obscured, until we reached the snow, and passed into the body of a huge wet cloud, which capped the range over which we were passing. Close by the top we took shelter under some rocks, for the wind was keen, and seating ourselves on a large stone which was clear of snow, pulled out our provender and made a hasty but hungry luncheon, or second breakfast. Then, with lightened knapsacks, we descended a short snow slope and changed our view for that of the valley of Saas. It is desolate in the extreme. The path lies over ruin—rubbish is too small and impertinent a word—from the mountains, and presents no difficulties except where the torrents are swelled by rain. We crossed one rather ticklish place, where the water rushed

around the stones with so fierce a roar as to have whipped us off our legs if we had caught a slip. We met a lady and her husband, the former in crinoline, who were making a very toilsome business of the ascent. Hoops may be graceful in a drawing-room, but they make a wretched draggled show in a rough mountain pass on a wet day.

The valley of Saas is remarkable for the glaciers which stream down into it from the huge range of the Saas Grat, then on our left hand. Three of these show themselves at once; the two farthest, the Adler and the Alalein, seen in profile, present their clear white-jagged outline in striking contrast to the dark mountains beyond. In places they are broken into great peaks and towers of ice, and one, the Alalein, thrusts itself so deep down into the valley as to dam the stream which descends it into a considerable lake, called the Mattmark See. It was some time, however, before we reached this, or even saw it; but the glaciers were plain enough.

Presently we came to the chalets of the Distel Alp. They are built, roof and wall, of the stones around, and are very low, thus you may look down on the hamlet for some time without know ing that there is a hamlet at all. As there are some birds which make their nests upon the ground, and, to avoid detection, lay eggs like in colour to the soil, so these people of Distel have huts which

you might pass in the twilight without notice. They looked to me like square blisters on the rock. Around and among them, defiling the fresh mountain-air and staining the rain-streams, were heaps of manure, so absurdly disproportioned to the size of the place as to suggest the idea of a mountain dépôt for that unsavoury valuable. I have seldom seen a dirtier place; and yet the lungs of the natives managed to get a good supply of oxygen; for I think I never saw a more chubby, rosy-cheeked set among Alpine peasants than the few who inhabit these poor huts. But what a life; Their time must be spent mainly in saving manure and spreading it upon such pastures as they have. The whole population, apparently, was engaged in the last work as we passed. Our guide exchanged cheery greetings with some girls carrying large baskets on their backs, filled to overflowing with the commodity which characterizes the place, and shedding a wake of perfume which would have made a London inspector of nuisances feel at home. "Why," I thought or said to myself, "do they not contrive to fix their sleeping-places at some distance from this foul and filthy spot?" But no; here they work, and laugh, and rest; here they remain as a protest for the air of the valley, which can overcome many evil influences of such an atmosphere as its inhabitants create around themselves.

Passing the Distel Alp, we walked briskly on towards the Mattmark See, and were much struck here, as well as in the Val Anzasca, with the beautiful colours of the stones. Huge masses of a kind of serpentine showed their tints in contrast to red and brown rock fragments, some polished by ice or water, and some sharply broken, which lay around them. Besides these there were bright orange and green lichens; while the deep azure and brilliant white of the glaciers met the eye directly you looked up from the ground. I pocketed a number of scraps, which now imperfectly recall to me the abundant colouring which then surrounded us.

We held a short council about stopping outside the inn at the Mattmark See, but decided on continuing our walk to Saas, though the rain, which, having held off for a while, now began to fall again heavily.

There is an ascent for some time at the foot of the lake over the terminal moraine at the Alalein glacier, under the ice of which the lake escapes. Its water is, or was then, very muddy, unlike the clear blue Marjalen See, which washes the cliffs of the great Aletsch glacier under the Aeggischorn.

We were much disappointed at the bad weather we met here, having hoped to ascend the Stralhorn, from which, being at the end of the Saas Grat, or

range on our left, there is, they say, one of the grandest views in the whole Alps. We had to content ourselves with being shown the way we should have gone if the sky had been fine, and walked on to Saas, stopping two or three times to admire the great dam of ice which now lay behind us. Some way short of Saas there is a magnificent view up into the snows of the Mischaebelhorner. If an inn were built here, it would be popular, since from the village, a little lower down, this striking scene is lost.

We got into Saas in good time; but on ordering dinner we were requested to wait till a party who had announced their arrival had come in from Visp. We were never more pleased to see strangers, although our united numbers strained the larder almost past endurance. A famous traveller, well known in "Vacation Tourists," who had been to the inn, left as the sole record of his visit, in the travellers' book, "Try the ducks." They had survived till now, and were at this moment gobbling in the puddles outside, with much promise of life. But the hint was partially taken that day, and some of the ducks were doomed. There was a great lack of attendance here, which we seemed to understand as chronic the minute we entered the place. A gentleman happening to enter the *salle à manger* with myself, and finding the room dreary

and cold, said, "I wish they would have a fire." "How shall we light one? there is nothing but a heap of logs." So I looked about and suggested, "Burn the newspapers." No sooner had I hinted this, than he seized first and last editions, right and left, and, whipping out a lucifer, won the thanks of the house for a good blaze, which we took care to keep up with pieces split off the logs with our clasp-knifes, and then with the logs themselves. The people of the inn made no remark on the disappearance of the journals, and we had a fire which would have roasted a sheep. We had a merry dinner—it was a scanty one—and all sat gladly round the hearth; for, though we soon afterwards found the weather far hotter than we liked, we were now at a considerable height, and more rain made the autumn evening cold.

Next morning the rain came down again, and we wearied ourselves in watching it from the inn door. The landlord was positive that it would continue: some guides and porters, who wanted a job, wet or dry, said that it would hold up. Thus is the "wish father to the thought." When noon came we determined to start as soon as ever there was a chance; meanwhile, the surviving ducks enjoyed life, and the landlord rejoiced, but at 2h. 55m. we set off. Hearing that it would take us some five hours to reach Visp, we started at such a

pace that our porter cried out, and showed symptoms of striking work at once; so we distributed the heaviest of the baggage among the party, and having thus lightened him of several pounds of excuse, kept up a swinging pace to Stalden, which is about five miles from Visp, and which latter place we reached in two hours and twenty minutes, including halts. We were anxious to get over our walk soon, both because we wished to see the scenery, and didn't like the prospect of perhaps staggering over watercourses in the dusk. As it was, we were turned aside once or twice by the overflowing of the river, which flows, or rather rushes, down the Saas valley, and got into the town of Visp just at nightfall, walking on from thence to Brieg in the dark,

The scenery between Saas and Stalden is very beautiful; indeed, I much prefer it to that between Stalden and Zermatt, which we saw on a former Swiss Round. We passed through several very picturesque villages, perched on the sides of the mountain at commanding spots. One of them had apparently a face in every window. Something had touched the curiosity of the people, and, when we went through, they all, I will not say hurried out to look at us, but seemed rather to go in-doors to survey us from above. I never saw window-panes so luminous with eyes. When we got to

Stalden, J. and my brother walked slowly on, while I took the porter into the inn, for something to drink. He was rather done, and we thought a glass of the valley wine would set him up again. I like these quaint, rambling, country inns; but here, when the porter and I had had a small bottle of red wine mixed with water, I found I had only some gold in my purse, and they hadn't such a thing as change. Happily, I bethought me of two small coins in an odd pocket, that would pass nowhere—not that they were base, but they belonged to another country. The people, however, took them good-humouredly enough — indeed, rather valued them for their speciality—and the porter and I gave chase to the other half of our party.

I should have noticed the swollen state of the river in the Saas Thal. The Visp here rose in many places to the very lip of its bank, occasionally even making a small puddle on our path, in which flakes of foam and small bits of wood took refuge from the roaring current. Here and there large rounded stones, such as show dry and hot throughout a summer, set up their backs sturdily in the middle of the torrent, and literally made the waters to stand on heap, the rush up and over the obstacle being in several places as big as a good-sized haycock.

It was dusk when we entered Visp, and changed

our porter at the post inn of the town. The people wanted us to take on a carriage; but we were too hot, and refused to do so, otherwise we should have enjoyed the drive. This produced the only incivility we met with on our tour.

The people at Saas were poor managers; but they laughed, and seemed to think the shortcomings of their inn rather a joke. Indeed at Visp alone was there malignant rudeness. I should say that we missed seeing the hamlet of Fée, which is above Saas; but we saw the scenery around it; and if you can imagine a little peninsular of green, squeezed up in the middle of a glacier, you can understand the speciality of the place. But I am sure it is well worth visiting, though the clouds prevented us from making an expedition there while we were at Saas.

But now we are at Brieg once more, and sitting at supper in the wonderful dining-room, reading notes from our wives (except J., who is the last rose of summer), saying how well they were in the air of the Bel Alp, and that they were coming down to join us the next day. The landlord of our inn also, who is rather like Napoleon, only the bridge of his nose turns in instead of out, told us that the ladies had been very comfortably lodged a day or two after we had left them,

We were rather puzzled as to their means for

getting down the luggage, as we found they had ordered no baggage-horse, and we knew they had two portmanteaus and two carpet-bags, besides smaller articles. "Surely," we said, "they can never bring down all that baggage on manback;" and it was with some curiosity, as well as proper devotion, that we went next day a short distance up the path towards the Bel Alp to meet the cavalcade.

Spirit of Atlas! what beasts of burden these Swiss are. Keeping close behind the ladies, came first a smiling peasant, by no means conscious that he was doing what I thought a wonderful feat, but actually carrying on his shoulders the familiar, old black leather portmanteau, with white stripes, which I have seen so many railway porters heave up with a grunt. This man of the mountain had carried it for three hours, much of the time down a rough, steep path. Another man followed. The two were loaded as if they had been employed from a cab to a railway platform, but by no means distressed; indeed, we found out that they had preferred this arrangement to the sending for a horse, and had been jealous lest any one should cut them out of the five francs each; for this was the price they proposed for the feat. I gave them a trifle extra, and I believe they would have carried me home if I had wished. I am anything but feeble

myself at present, and yet I think I should have given way under that portmanteau within the half-hour.

Here we parted from my brother and his wife. They went up the Valais to Meyringen, while we set our faces downwards, and made for the head of the Lake of Geneva. We staid at Brieg only a few hours after the ladies had joined us. J. and I took places in the diligence for Sion, which we expected to reach between ten and eleven that night. There were so many passengers, however, that three or four "supplements," or extra carriages, had to be got ready. Ours was fitted to carry two in front, four inside, and two behind, these last sitting with their backs to the horses, as in the hind seat of a dog-cart, and therefore enjoying a retrospective review of the scenery and the rest of the train of supplements. First of course, went the diligence proper, with much whipcord, bell-metal, and ejaculation; then came our vehicle, with its own share of noise, and more than its share of dust; then the train tailed off to something like a gig, almost invisible in the white powdery cloud which rose from the road we were all trotting upon. In the front of the carriage next ours there sat a shabby but kindly-faced priest. Indeed, as his driver kept his horse's head close at our heels, or rather toes, I could do nothing but look this

priest full in the face till it grew dark. The sensation of continually looking away from somebody whose eye you can catch, is at first ludicrous, then irritating. I was in a good position, though, to notice the greetings which passed between this gentleman and the people we met. Every one saluted him. I think I must have sat opposite to one of the most respected men in the Valais; and yet, to look at, he was unimposing enough.

The valley of the Rhone is well traversed in the dark. It is monotonous and mangy. The sooner you leave it the better you are pleased. On this occasion, however, we were much delayed by the mischief done to the roads by the late floods. Every now and then the horses walked; and any one who knows to what a mere name motion is reduced at such a pace by a diligence, will not wonder at our impatience of the road. At last, however, we came to a stand in Sion, our destination for the day.

A sleepy waiter laid out some supper in a deserted *salle à manger*, and a chamber-maid, with an extraordinary local turban, or structure, on her head, soon showed us our rooms, which looked out into a square court. There is not much to see at Sion, unless you except some castles which characterize the place. The mounds here, and elsewhere in the valley of the Rhone, must be a puzzle for

geologists, unless they can account for them by the former presence of ice, which caused many irregular and steep deposits.

We left soon after breakfast, by the rail, for Bex. But there are several most beautiful lateral villages, the entrances to which we had driven by, and which are highly praised in the guide-books. We had once before come down that into which you descend from the Gemmi Pass. Mind you, I don't pretend to be a guide at all. While being careful to keep such topical information as I give accurate, I perpetually omit mention of places to which the guide-books devote pages. If you go to Switzerland, you will take 'Murray,' or the 'Practical Guide,' or 'Bradshaw,' or, best of all, I think, the new book brought out under the auspices of the Alpine Club. In these pages I am only an ordinary tourist, going one of the regular rounds, and giving you such impressions as I get by the way.

When we arrived at Bex, which is a station on the great trunk down the valley, we found the village, or town, I suppose it should be called, some twenty minutes off, and an omnibus waiting to convey us there. No, we would walk. So the whole party, which then had turned out of the train, had their luggage piled on the 'bus, and, seeing it start off, strolled quietly towards the town.

One canny young lady alone, belonging to some fellow-travellers, got into it, in order, as we supposed, to have the first pick of rooms. The great ugly vehicle had not gone far, along a sort of low causeway, or raised road, across a field, before it turned deliberately over, and flung the whole load of luggage clean away. But about the young lady. I jumped on the side of the concern, which lay with wheels in air, and hauled her up through a window, providentially neither cut nor bruised. Had we all gone by this conveyance, we should have had a horrible jumble, aud probably met with mischief. How soon and unexpectedly an accident happens! Here might have been a man, safe from feats among the glaciers, down again on the flats, with guide dismissed and dangers over. He takes his seat on an omnibus, which, with the safest of slow cattle, jogs along at three miles an hour. Driver gapes and flicks at a butterfly. Horses waddle clumsily along. All at once the fore-wheel goes into a ditch, and our mountaineer finds himself on the footpath with his head under a trunk of family linen. We are cautious, and keep our wits alive, when we suspect danger; then we nod safely, and are in the midst of it. The explorer brings back his limbs whole from the desert and the iceberg, and then, perhaps, slips on a piece of orange-peel in Baker Street, and breaks his leg.

IX.—BEX TO WEYMOUTH.

WE did not go straight from one of these places to the other, for we took in by the way a sojourn of a few days at two of the *pensions* in the neighbourhood, Champery and Chardonne. Places of this sort, where an inn constitutes the village—or at least the only part of the village capable of sheltering the tourist—are becoming more common every year, and therefore I will pause to speak a word more about them before we return to England.

But first we spent a Sunday at Bex. Our inn, the "Hôtel Crochet," which proved to be reasonable and comfortable, lay somewhat outside the place, and had a garden whence there were fine views of the Dent du Midi, Dent du Morcle, etc., and where several English families seemed to be living in a very sociable way, the young folks swinging under one of the trees, or walking about with a strong atmosphere of home about them, and many local allusions. Indeed I believe that some were permanent residents.

Bex is a pretty place, the views of the mountains over the trees being very pleasing. It seems as if set in an amphitheatre, and surprised me by the beauty of its scenery.

The service was held in the church of the place, after it had been used by the natives. I really think, though, that such a small handful as can worship together in many of these foreign towns had better meet in an appropriately fitted room, than risk the depressing sight of a score of people in a wilderness of sounding whitewash. The congregation at Bex occupied about one-twentieth part of the building.

Next morning we went to St. Maurice, and from St. Maurice to Monthey, by rail. This required us to take tickets and register our luggage twice, though the first journey lasted two minutes and a half, and the latter two minutes. St. Maurice has been famed for its bridge. Here the valley of the Rhone is nipped up to a narrow gorge, which served in past years to check the progress of an army. Now it marks a point of contact between the cantons of Vaud and the Valais. Arriving at Monthey, we hired one of the native cars, and set off without more ado to Champery, a village about three hours up the Val d'Illiers, at the foot of the Dent du Midi. It was hot, and our driver took prodigious care not to distress his horse or himself. Going up-hill this was shown by walking, or rather crawling, and going down-hill by the application of a break to the wheels, which was put on by a little winch, like the handle of a coffee mill,

under his seat. I called it a coffee-mill, and he seized hold of the resemblance at once. When we came to a slight descent, "Coffee-mill again," said he, and screwed away under his coat-tails. There are two villages before you get to Champery, but we stayed only for a few minutes at one. Trois-Torrents. The scenery of the valley is pretty. Pasture, rock, torrent, and pine, mark it as Swiss; but we compared it with others, and said, "No doubt—it is very pretty!" However, here we were for a day or two, and if we had been able to find better accommodation, we should have liked the place more than we did. One incident coloured the whole of my impressions, and gave an unpleasant tinge to the view. It was this: One day I was walking slowly, with my coat on my arm, along with my good friend Dr. R., whom with his wife we were rejoiced to meet here, when I looked over into the yard of a wayside chalet, and saw a pig—a well-conditioned, sensual-eyed pig—lying in the shade. At that moment his owner approached with a thick stake in his hand. There was nothing in this: but he killed the pig with it suddenly. All at once he whirled his bludgeon in the air, and brought it down on piggy's forehead, making him into pork with a blow. It was a murder. No doubt the victim suffered less than those which squeak so horribly at the knife. He

made no sign of dislike whatever; but there was an air of felonious violence about the process which would have made me feel hardly safe in the company of such a butcher.

When we got to Champery we found the "Hotel de la Dent du Midi" quite full. There was really not room to lodge a child in it. Guests had already overflowed, and were sleeping in chalets about the village, and even in the village school-room, or town-hall, as it was called, at any rate where the desks were piled up behind a curtain at the end, and which was so large that I found Professor R. playing at skittles in it with his brother. They set up logs for pins and bowled with the roundest lumps of firewood they could find.

There is, however, another little inn, the "Croix Fédérale," which took us in. Our apartment was the top slice of a garret, shaped something like a square hat-box, and so low that it was hardly safe, for the skin of your knuckles, to brush your hair without kneeling down. This was the only chance we had, though, of a lodging, and we should therefore have been pleased enough had we been obliged to dress on all-fours. The crowded state of the place was the result of over-praising. The guide-books said that it was delightful, and up the tourists crawled in shoals, till the poor bumpkins of the village wondered what ever had happened

to their home. It is pretty enough, no doubt, and has a vast number of lovely and available walks; but the business of the inn, to which we moved next day, was carried on in a scrambling way, the landlord being, we thought, rather more fond of billiard-playing than was consistent with proper attention to his guests. I must say, however, that, considering the unknown loneliness of the place a few years ago, it now is, or was when we were there, more lively than any we visited. The people were sociable, and all made the best of rather scanty fare.

We arrived at Champery the day before the festival of its patron saint, St. Theodule. There was evidently something coming off. I looked into the church, which was close to our little hotel, and found the sexton dusting everything within reach of a feather-brush at the end of a long stick. A monk came up from the valley on a mule to help in the morrow's performances. The *curé* fidgeted in and out of his house, which was between us and the church. The bells went mad. A man up in the tower played *carillons* till we were all heartily tired of them. Somebody said that he had the bell-ropes tied to his elbows, hands, and feet, and kicked up in the air like an angry spider in the middle of his web. No doubt, however, he merely laid about him with a couple

of hammers. It would have been impossible for any one to have put himself into such musical convulsions as to produce what we heard by any other mode of tune-chiming.

Next morning the festivities were begun by a brass band, at the monstrous hour of three o'clock. It was pitch-dark. Our windows were open. There was no sound but the splashing of a little wooden fountain in the garden of the inn, and the distant drawl of the torrent at the bottom of the valley, when all at once the band brayed the whole village out of its sleep. This done, they took care not to let us off again. The blast of the instruments was apparently a signal to the bells, for they woke up all at once—and to the cannon of the place, for they were fired irregularly from this time throughout the forenoon. They were not cannon, however, so much as machines for burning gunpowder noisily. They served no other purpose, and were more like common office pewter inkstands than anything else. A row of these was set in the middle of the road, the well of the inkstand being charged and a fuse stuck in the side pen-hole. There seemed to be no rule in the firing of these. Every now and then there was a bang, and the little boys rejoiced. Besides the cannon, bells, and band, there were occasional tootings from private horns, till at last the sounds

merged into the street songs and cries of those—a good many, I am sorry to say—who ended a day of festivity with too many glasses of kirschwasser.

There is much authority of some kind exercised by the priest here. He is especially severe on the subject of innovations in dress, and forbids crinoline, apparently with success. Some of the women, indeed, go to the other extreme, and wear *bonâ fide* jacket and trousers, precisely like a boy's, while they are engaged in tending cows upon the mountains. The "costume" of the valley is unbecoming: high waists, dark frieze gowns, and hat-like caps, mark the women; while the men wear tail-coats, singularly ill-fitting, and great gills, like blinkers, of coarse linen.

The chief expedition from this place is the ascent of the Dent du Midi. It is fatiguing, because you have to climb a good deal of loose shale. We did not go up, but several did while we were there, and spoke of the view as magnificent. From Champery there are two or three passes into French Switzerland, that into the valley of Sixt being most frequently taken. We walked to the top of it and back one day, at least J. and I did; but the Aeggischorn and its surroundings blot out the impression of these lesser views. I feel bound to say, however, that we had heard so much about the very great beauty of Champery before we

visited Switzerland this year, that we were perhaps unjustly disappointed when we came to see it. I can well imagine, though, from the variety of its walks and freshness of its air, that one might fall in love with Champery on better acquaintance. One family here had found their affection for it grow throughout a six weeks' sojourn. I forget how many children there were in the house, but at least a dozen under twelve years of age. We all took our meals together. The bread-and-butter consumed was prodigious. On two evenings some of the party acted charades, and got up several scenes with great applause. Another night a wandering juggler made his appearance, and he performed the usual variations on cards, pocket-handkerchiefs, and hats. On a wet day we played chess, told stories, and wrote. For children and families these high *pensions* are excellent; for, as they ought not to be taken to smaller inns in the mountains, where the room is wanted for those who climb and explore places which the children and nurses never reach, we liked it well enough; but somehow this life is not heartily Swiss. Too many English get together. The attendants lack the freshness and coolness of the regular native servants. There is too much of the telescopic pottering atmosphere of the common English watering-places. Still, in making a Swiss tour you

will probably come across a growing number of these boarding-houses, where the elders read the 'Times' in the morning and walk out for two or three hours in the afternoon, and the children do lessons with their governess at regular times. This is not what we like to associate with the knapsack, the hobnails, and the alpenstock; and I would warn any one who spends, say a month, in Switzerland, to avoid the *pensions*. Let him move on, and weeks will seem double. No doubt you can get fine views from a boarding-house; but the hour of dinner, one o'clock, and the prevailing habits of the establishment, give an in-door, stationary character to the society which you find there, hostile to progress and enterprise. I refer especially to these larger *pensions*. We sat down about sixty to tea. At some houses there may be a dozen who can make an arrangement with the innkeeper to put the dinner-hour at a time consistent with a day's walk; but I know of few inns where they dine *en pension* at six or seven o'clock.

One soft morning, when the clouds had floated up the valley and cut off the top of the Dent du Midi, though sometimes showing its highest peaks quite in the sky, and powdered with last night's snow, we strolled down to Monthey for another short railway journey to Bouveret, whence the steamer crosses the lake to Vevey, not directly,

though, for it touches at several places first. Now the lovely fringe of the Lake of Geneva, where it is made famous by the names of Clarens and Chillon, is shut in by two lines of steam, and hears the horrid whistle at both its ears. The boats command and coast it on the water side; while, on the land side, cutting and embankment sever it from the country. If the Prisoner of Chillon were there now, and could pop his head out, he would see with one eye a railway-guard, and a "man at the wheel" with the other.

When we had passed the castle we touched at Montreux and fouled the pier. An old woman with a basket of eggs, and two somewhat battered but unmistakable cockney tourists with three weeks' moustaches, went ashore, handing in those limp paper tickets which seem made to be blown away from steamers. The captain cried "Go on!" in a foreign tongue, when the thing was found to be fast. A plank had got off the pier into one of the paddles. It was a simple matter; a lad with a bill-hook would have cleared it out in three minutes; but this slight incident told me strongly, that though we had made a great descent homewards from the Aeggischorn and Mattmark See, we were still far from the boatmen of England. The captain shrieked and raved: the crew bounced about, ran against each other, shouted to mates at

their elbows, pulled ropes between the legs of the passengers, and behaved as if they were foundering on board the "Royal George."

Arrived at Vevey, we drove to the "Belle Vue" at Chardonne, about an hour's walk above the town, in the midst of vineyards and walnut-trees. Thus we escaped the heat of the narrow streets at the water's edge, and had an enlarged edition of the view from Vevey spread out beneath our windows. I think this must be one of the most lovely prospects by the Lake of Geneva. There are inns at Glyon above Montreux at some height, but they have a less varied view. Here we sat at our tea in the balcony, with the lake widening out on our right, backed by the Jura behind, while the sun was setting. Before us rose the mountains at the back of Bouveret and St. Gingough, on the opposite shore. Beneath us lay the brown roofs of Vevey, from which fragments of distant band-music floated up, and where we could just see the jaunty flags of the pleasure-boats belonging to the Trois-Couronnes. On our left rose the Dent du Jaman, and beyond it the valley of the Rhone showed a perspective of promontories, till it was closed, or rather squeezed, to a narrow chink in the gorge of St. Maurice. Beyond lay purple and brown mountains, topped in violet evening air by far-off glacier and snow.

Filled as we had been with wild and lovely panoramas, my wife and I sat in the balcony looking down on this scene, with a resolution to stay here till the last. "Here," said I, "we say farewell to Switzerland for this year." And I rang the bell and gave the waiter my alpenstock, with orders to saw the steel point off (which I carried home for future use), and keep the stick for himself. Here we stayed three days, mostly looking lazily down upon the lake, now patched with sapphire as the sun struck down upon it through a cloud, now orange in the western evening. Here we stayed dawdling about, watching the crawling speck of a steamer far beneath, or the little toy train, whose whistle we could barely hear as it wound among the embankments by the water-side. Here we stayed till we made a rush home, and went straight to Weymouth without a break.

J. left for Geneva, intending to have joined us on our way home at Neuchatel, but he missed his train. Before he left we found some amusement from the change, in the kind of people who dwell in these *pensions*. Here they were stay-at-home, chattering economists. People come to these places to save money. Probably they enter the recesses of Swiss scenery no more than if they were staying at Margate; but they live "genteelly" for four-and-a-half francs a day, and help one

another to kill time. There were, say, a score of people in the house. They breakfasted and talked, and took little feeble walks about in the neighbourhood. Then they dressed a little for dinner, and dined—fish, soups, *entreés*, kickshaws, poultry, fruit, and small wine. Then they took a shorter walk; then they had tea, and talked till bedtime. And this round they repeated, or at least we found them apparently confirmed in repeating, every day. The pother and small proprieties of the place would soon have dimmed the beauty of the view to us; therefore we were not sorry when we got into the train for Paris, by way of Neuchatel. We had not yet, however, bidden farewell to the snow; for when we had reached the high grounds above this latter place, the whole of Switzerland discovered itself from the window of the carriage. On our right rose Mont Blanc; then the Dent du Midi marked the mountains by the great valley of the Rhone; while clear in the evening air, across the farther borders of the lake which lay beneath us, stood the familiar peaks of the Bernese Oberland. It was a magnificent scene. Then the train, which all this while had been gradually creeping up among the dislocations of the Jura range, shrieked into a tunnel, and all was gone.

Presently we found ourselves winding through the beech-woods and limestone crags which mark

the other side of the mountains over which we were making our way, and thus slid down into the flats of France.

We travelled all night, and, merely driving through Paris, caught the Boulogne train, for which the Folkestone boat was waiting.

It was curious to watch how Swiss associations died off. In the train to Paris there were several sunburnt walkers, fresh from the pass, peak, and glacier; two or three battered knapsacks, with well-worn but still serviceable Swiss nailed high-lows tied on them, were landed with the baggage at Folkestone; and a solitary alpenstock, with a chamois horn at the top, was handed out to a young lady who got down at the Moreton Station, near Weymouth. Hurrah for home! though we have no glittering Alpine snow, nor deep blue Italian lake. Hurrah for dear old misty grumbling England!

Joy to the man who can both work and play, to whom the toil of a mountain tour brings rest, and the recollections of his summer outing help to make the winter's labour sweet.

And here I make my bow to the readers of the second Trip of the 'Regular Swiss Round,' with a quotation from 'Holiday Papers,' which I hope will commend itself to them:—

"But of all the retrospects—now that I am sitting in my own study, with my papers about me

within, and my work to do without—nothing touches me with so deep a feeling of compassion as the case of permanent residents abroad. I don't mean the invalids, whose search for health occupies and interests them, but the listless, chattering people who live at hotels, and have nothing to do. There is something more than dreary, something appalling, in their state. They are the centre of no family, no village, no circle, no set even of tradesman—nothing abides by them. They move from inn to inn, with less hold on the human race than the post-boys who help to drive them. Even the very courier, who seems as detached a dot of humanity as any man, is earning his bread by flitting from place to place, and wearing out the signs of his distinctive nationality; but he has probably a wife somewhere, and children who send him letters in large printed characters, with their love and a kiss. Your wandering inn-hunter, however, is earning nothing, loving nothing. In most cases he is pleasing, voluble and heartless. He makes the acquaintance of everybody, talks about everything, and will some day be found sick and frightened by the waiter, and die alone in a crowded hotel, to the disgust of the landlord, who will smuggle out his corpse by night, and take care that all the household look as if nothing were the matter.

"But joy to the man who has a welcome home, and faces the old familiar work with fresh and buoyant heart. Nothing like a pause, and a view of our position from a distance. If you would see the battle, you must mount a hill; and as each man is more or less his own general, it is well for him to step aside out of the smoke and noise for a while, and see how matters look from without. The whole of a scheme reveals itself. We see the tendency of some favourite plan: we decide on cutting off that, on dropping this, on securing such and such a result. We have time to breathe and look about us. We know where objects lie when we return to the battle: our short excursion has shown us a map of the field. We spare our strength, and are stronger still. We work not only with freshened spirits, but with a far clearer understanding of what we are about, when we come back again."

THIRD TRIP.

THIRD TRIP.

THIS year we changed our route and went by the Rhine. One hot July afternoon I was walking through the Regent Circus and stepped into an office to inquire about our way. "Yes," said a smiling man in a black beard, "you can take tickets and register your luggage through to Heidelburg." And here I am, sitting in the garden of the Hôtel de Russie, stopping a day with some friends and feeling that there is only a run of a few hours to the Lake of Constance, and then heigh! for the Engadine, in which corner of Switzerland and its belongings we proposed to spend a month, and complete such a rough sketch of the Regular Swiss Round as we can, I say we, for my wife is with me, and is at this moment eating a comfortably late breakfast in a cool corner of the *salle à manger*, the back door to which opens upon the garden by five stone steps.

My old friend J. was to have accompanied us, but got married instead, and preceded us into

Switzerland, by some weeks, with his wife. Of course this was very inconsiderate, but I suppose we must overlook it this time.

There is one drawback to the first blush of a tour which I should be sorry not to feel. The pleasant vision of Alp, pine forest, and snow, suddenly kindled by my interview with the smiling man in the Regent Circus office, was dashed in a few minutes by my return to the hot close courts at the bottom of Berwick Street, where my work lies, and where so many of my friends are still working in the stale old rooms, while I am sitting here in the shady garden of the inn at Heidelburg, on my way to the iced airs and noble scenery of Pontresina. I wish I had a Prince Houssein's carpet as big as Hyde Park. I would coax the district upon it and whisk it off for a few days to some of those grand Swiss hill-sides I know so well. Wouldn't the tailors and their wives and white-faced children open their eyes and fill their lungs and tire their legs. What is my weariness at work in Berwick Street since last September, when I had my holiday in the snows of the Aeggischorn, and the glories of the Italian lake, compared with theirs? And yet here I am again in the first week of what promises to be another fine outing. I almost feel as if I ought to be ashamed of such a privilege; and yet this sentence looks affected now

that I have set it down, for I don't feel ashamed, but am full of hunger for the mountains I hope so soon to see.

We have come, I say, by the Rhine, and I am thankful at hoping that this of Heidelberg will be the last large ruined castle I shall see for a long time. Those bones of the middle ages which strew the banks of the Rhine are dry food after all. I am choked with castles, full of ruins, and gladly begin to dismiss their taste as I sit here in the shade, putting a head to my little journal before we step into Switzerland. * * * *

Weeks have passed. We have spent a bright little winter in the month of August among the Highlands of the Engadine. The snow fell upon the meadows beneath our window. The noonday air was shrewd and nipping in the shade. The enthusiasm of the tourists who had crawled up on all sides into this iced and breezy world out of the blistering glare of Milan, Innspruck, and Carlsruhe, rose as the mercury in the thermometer went down. We read in the papers of drought and sunstroke, and felt incredulous. We supposed that the weather had changed. No such thing, the dog-days were going on upon the sultry earth beneath, but the lake, with its crisp cold waves, under our window, lay at something like twice the height of Snowdon above the sea, and the glacier-streaked

mountains which surrounded it chilled the hot air as it passed over their frozen summits. But I must not anticipate. We left Heidelberg one Monday morning, and after receiving a parting present of Saturday's 'Times' from a kind friend who accompanied us to the station, arrived after a nine hours' journey at Neuhausen, which is the station people alight at to see the famous Rhine falls of Schaffhausen.

There is a much quicker approach, indeed it is the chief one in these parts, to Switzerland by Friedrichshafen; a steamer takes the trainful across the Lake of Constance to Rorschach, where another train carries them on at once to Coire. We went by Neuhausen to see the falls, You look down upon them from the window of the railway-carriage; and two inns, of which I think the Schweitzer Hof is the best, sit upon the high river-bank immediately in face of the cataract. Tired and dusty, we were in no mood for a closer view of it than that from the garden of the hotel, Perhaps this is the finest. The river, here of deep blue, streaked with curls of clean white foam, after being hurried and disturbed by a succession of premonitory rapids, tumbles in great masses of broken water over a shelf some eighty feet high. Of course the roar is considerable even at a distance, and a thousand curdled waves bob about and hurry round

the basin into which the stream falls, slapping up against one another's faces, and pausing in odd corners, as if they had lost their presence of mind and way at the same time, or were stopping for a minute to look back at the plunge they had just taken, and laugh together at the fright it gave them, before they settled themselves to their journey once more. We sat at the open window till the moon rose, intending the next morning to explore the falls. But somebody else did it for us. I should have said that there is a rock in the middle of the cataract upon which the boatmen land tourists, and from whence, climbing to its top, you look close upon the river at the moment when it takes its leap. Well, just as I was getting up I saw a boat with a boy pulling in the bows and a man steering and paddling, gondola fashion, in the stern, put off from the opposite side and make towards the rock which divides the falls. There were two passengers in the middle of the boat. Getting out my telescope I laid it on the window-sill and had the pleasure of the excursion without its inconveniences. The boat, aided by the eddy of the chief fall, soon approached the bottom of the rock, popping up and down in the froth, and occasionally almost blotted out of sight by the showers of spray which fell around it. One more stroke of the steerman's oar and its bow bumped on the wet

stones, the boy jumping out at the same moment and making the rope which he held in his hand safe to some hold-fast on the shore. Then the tourists landed, wiped their faces with their pocket-handkerchiefs, and scrambled up the rock, from whence, in a little tea-garden-like temple of the winds, perched on its summit, they looked at the falls; then they scrambled down again, got a second dripping, paused, apparently to have a dispute about the fare with the waterman, and disappeared. "There," said I to my wife, when I shut up the telescope, "that will do. I shall have a pipe after breakfast instead of a boat." And while I was keeping this resolution I thought how much the pleasure of a sight is spoiled when the seer insists on sniffing and poking about all over it like an inspector of nuisances. These famous Rhine falls, for instance, leave a reserve of admiration for them in the traveller who is content to gaze at them with that placid receptive respect which I felt. "Stand in the middle of them! row under them! look up at them from the foam! creep behind them!" scream the guide-books. "You can do it before the morning train starts. It won't cost you more than five or six francs, and then you will have seen all." "Be quiet, Mr. Murray," I reply; "there is no greater mistake than to try and see all." Leave a little for the day-dreamer to

CONSTANCE.

glean and exaggerate. I hate a man or woman who wants to see everything that can be seen. Such a one ought to be set to appraise furniture, look over inventories of crockery and bedding at a Pantechnicon, and never travel, except incognito and alone.

Thus I prattled, foolishly enough I dare say you may think, but pleasantly to myself, till the time came to start for Constance, whence we were bound by steamer to Rorschach, which port on the lake is also a station on the Coire Railroad.

We reached Constance at eleven, having bright glimpses of the blue Rhine by the way. Here I noticed that the gendarmes at the stations had double-barrelled guns, which they slung at their backs, like foreigners going out shooting. This, however, was not a Swiss but a German arrangement, since we had now for a short time re-entered the territories of the Grand Duke of Baden.

We were struck with the size and beauty of the lake. We seemed to have reached the sea, for there was a hot haze which just then hid distant mountains from the view, and a steamer in the horizon left a long trail of smoke behind it; but the bright clear blue water, showing the pebbles far beneath the rounded bottoms of the boats which lay by the quay-side, recalled at once its relationship to Geneva. The surface of the lake

was as flat as this paper. There was not a breath of wind, and we gladly sat down at once under the awning in the hinder part of the steamer. A heap of black luggage seemed to blister in the sun, and the bright bell in the boat's bows glared as if it were white hot. Presently, however, a sailor took it by the nose and rang it smartly, the usual big rope was cast off and hauled on board by a little one, the first lazy pat of the paddles dispersed a crowd of hungry little fish who were begging under the gangway, and we steamed out upon the bright smooth open lake, leaving a gigantic letter V behind us, and creating a pleasant breeze by our own rapid motion. There were no English tourists on board but ourselves; we were out of the track for a day, since the stream of tourists flows more by Zurich, Wallenstadt, and St. Gall. Moreover, the Lake of Constance is voted not picturesque, and is therefore seldom visited for itself. I beg to protest. We admired it greatly for the contrast between its shores and the remarkable manner in which it shows the rise of Switzerland. On the German side the land is flat, while on the other, it mounts in successive ranges of hill-tops, so that the eye of the expectant tourist who crosses from Friedrichshafen to Rorschach, climbs up before him into the country he has come to explore.

But I must not get across yet. I must tell you that we changed our steamer, and waited some time for the train at Friedrichshafen, if it were only to mention the little fish in the harbour. The boat lay at the quay; my wife and I sat under the awning with a tall glass of bright cool Bavarian beer on the seat between us. A shoal of litle fish swam slowly about under my elbows as I leaned over the boat's side, making greedily at anything which dropped into the water. Well, I happened to be filling my pipe, and pitched a little pellet of shag tobacco into the middle of the party. Here was something solid at any rate, and the smallest butted and splashed at it till a big one rising from the depths swallowed it at a gulp, and then, sullenly turning off, waited as if to ask himself whether he had done wisely. In about half a minute an expression of anxiety came over his countenance, which was followed by a hasty reproduction of the quid. However, I consoled him with two wax lucifer matches, which I cut into short lengths, and he retained, with much apparent satisfaction.

By this time the train had arrived, and we set off in a straight course for Rorschach, which, like a tourist I met, you may as well call Horseback at once. Yes, this is one of the finest approaches to Switzerland. You are entertained on your way

by glimpses of the Rhine and its castles, which flash by the window of the railway-carriage, your appetite for hills is then allowed to accumulate as you travel over the flat country between Heidelberg and Friedrichshafen, and when you step upon the deck of the lake steamer, you see the Swiss Highlands rising up to welcome you on the other side.

We took tickets for Ragatz, and travelled pleasantly up the valley of the Rhine. Its scenery is far finer than that of the Rhone; vistas down lateral valleys, a jagged sky-line of mountain peaks, bold rock cliffs and pleasant green around the villages in the bottom, give a fine varied view throughout the whole course of the valley. When we got to Ragatz a shower came on, which soon grew into a thunderstorm. We were bothered at finding the principal hotel full, and had to put up at the Krone, which is a second-rate inn, and frequented almost entirely by Germans. But in the midst of the scramble, I could not help pausing to wonder at the marvellous effects of light in the storm. You see nothing like them in flat countries; they are immeasurably grand it is true anywhere, but here the quick flashes of the lightning and bright orange streaks of setting sunlight, which sloped down through the windows of the clouds, lit up the raindrops till they showed

like a golden veil, behind which the very God of Storms Himself might have been travelling up the valley.

Meanwhile, we stopped at the Krone and ordered tea. The *table d'hôte* was nearly over when we had washed our hands and descended to the *salle*, and a babel of talk, as usual, was resulting from an abundance of meat and drink. What odd people these middle-class foreigners always seem to us English; the thin men are thinner and the fat men fatter than with us; here were two arguing together, the face of the one was like an omelette, the other had none, only a profile. Beyond them was a rascal in a hat, who smoked and spat noisily while the others were eating their dinner; yet when he left the room he uncovered his head, and made a ceremonious leg at the company in perfect good faith.

But, however entertaining these phases of manner may be, I advise you not to seek them at the "Gasthaus von Krone," at Ragatz. When we went to our bedroom we found it occupied, not by anybody, but by the most appalling stink I ever met. The foul Spirit himself, the very Prince of Stench was there, and his train filled the house. My wife wanted me to go out and see whether rooms could not be had at some other inn, but the night was late and wet, and Ragatz was half asleep; so we

set the windows wide open, and tried to make the best of it: but I believe we were poisoned for several days. I shudder now with the memory of that broken slumber. Half-past five found me leaning out of the window, and replacing the air of the house with that of the fine fresh morning. Ragatz was already on the move, Not to speak of two great puppies towzling (that looks an ugly word, yet it expresses the idea) one another in the middle of the road, I saw people about their business with an air which showed that they had breakfasted. Among others, a little boy walked up the street driving a small party of goats, and occasionally blowing a cow's horn. At each toot of the instrument, two or three more goats made their appearance from some side alley or gateway, until, by the time their herd-boy had passed through the village, the whole flock was assembled, and walked leisurely onward towards the feeding-ground for the day. There was a bell ringing, too, somewhere about the bottom of the street, and little boys and girls, singly, and in small parties, but all with slates and copybooks, came trudging by, showing that school began at six o'clock. Ha! there is some incentive to punctuality here; this baggy breeched, bullet-headed, high-collared little Swiss with a great slate under his arm, racing down-hill from some upland chalet, like Jack the

BATHS AT PFEFFERS.

Giant Killer when he stole the harp, indicates strong educational influence at Ragatz. The whole place was astir, so we had a cup of coffee, and set off for the Baths of Pfeffers. This famous tourist-haunted spot lies up a ravine which begins immediately at the back of the village, and is threaded by an excellent char-road. The distance is only about two miles and a half, so we walked leisurely to enjoy both the morning air and the view. The ravine is narrow, and the road is carried along its banks some forty feet above the Tamina, which is of a dirty white, and makes the usual foam and noise in getting down-hill over broken rocks. I had heard so much of the wild grandeur of this ravine, that I was disappointed in finding it, as I thought, so commonplace. The sides were high and steep, the road in some places ran like a mere groove upon the face of the rock, indeed, it might well have been made a little more secure. I measured it in one place, and found it exactly three umbrellas wide; now as there was no parapet at this spot, a shying horse might readily cause an accident. A stone pitched into the Tamina here, took three seconds to reach the water; and this, though no very great depth, would be quite enough to dispose of a chaise-full of excursionists. For the most part the road is protected, or wide enough for two little chars to pass, and nothing can be easier to traverse on foot.

When we had walked about an hour we came upon an enormous building which seemed to fill the bottom of the ravine as if it had been wedged in here to stop all further progress. This is the old bath-house, formerly, in part at least, a nunnery. At any rate, now there was no way past it, and I smelt a fee. So we went into the building, and were led through a long corridor to a lad at a desk, who opened it, handed out two tickets marked one franc each, and gave change silently. Then an old man, with a key, was called, and led us through another long whitewashed passage like a crypt with doors on each side numbered up to 107. This part of the bath-house is devoted to poor patients who pay some small sum for their lodging while they drink the waters; and if they survive the gloom and smells of the place, the virtue of the remedy they seek must be great indeed. We saw a good many moping about, and looking very yellow and uncomfortable. Our old man unlocked a door at the further end of the building, and we found ourselves at the entrance of the gorge for which Pfeffers is celebrated. It is indeed most remarkable. I can compare it to nothing but a deep rock crevasse; the sides, separated but a few feet from each other, sculptured and smoothed by the torrent which runs through it, go sheer down into the foaming water below with no ledge on

which a cat could creep, and nearly meet overhead at a very considerable height. The path of planks is carried some hundreds of yards along one face of the rock, and sticks out like a rude balcony. When you look up you see a strip of dark-blue sky fringed with the bright-green leaves of the shrubs which grow on the lips of the cleft, while the torrent whirls along in wet and noisy gloom some 30 or 40 feet beneath your feet. At last we came to a passage which turned to the left, into the cliff itself. At the door were a row of pegs, and a candle; having lit this, and hung up his coat, advising me to do the same (for the spring whose source we were then about to visit rises at a temperature of about 100° Fahr., and makes the hole as hot as a Turkish bath), our guide led me down to the spot where the healing waters bubble up, steaming out of the rock. They are beautifully clear, and tasteless. Having drunk a glass I rejoined my wife, who waited at the door of the cavern, and returning along the dark chilly cleft, we passed out through the bath-house into the road which skirts the ravine, and walked back into Pfeffers.

At 1.54 we took the train for Coire, where the railroad ends, and the two carriage passes, the Splugen and Julier, begin to mount the Alps. The former of these forks out into the Bernardin,

the latter branches off first, at Silva Plana, into the Maloya, which leads to the right, down to the lake of Como, then it turns off again into the Bernina at Samâden, some way to the left; it also traverses the lower Engadine. I should say, too, that the Septimer pass leaves the Julier at Bivio, and strikes into the Maloya, cutting off a corner. This is an old pass, much used by the Romans, but little traversed now. Beside these the road down the great Rhine Valley from Andermatt by Disentis and Ilanz issues out at Coire, which thus receives the traffic of a large district, and is an important town. Indeed, it is the capital of the Grisons, in which part of Switzerland we now are.

I am not going to give you heavy historical extracts, but I must pause to ask you, if you should visit these parts, to get some small inkling of the history of this corner of Switzerland. Retaining to this day a separate language—Romansch; seamed with Roman military roads; studded with the ruins of feudal castles; with Germany under one, and Italy under the other shoulder; it was not till after a long and varied independence that the Grisons became a canton of Switzerland. The larger guide-books give you the outlines of its history, and the study, at least of these, is a good preparation for a visit to the district. We tourists

are too fond of skipping through a mountainous country with a vague impudent notion that it has been discovered by the "active pedestrians" whose enterprise is recorded and used in the handbooks of Messrs. Bradshaw and Murray. Somehow we associate venerable antiquity with the plains and great historical cities of Europe. Here too, however, in the Grisons, the broad features of the world's progress have been seen and stamped. Many thousand Roman noses have been pinched blue with the sharp air of the Julier. Wicked lawless lords have ground the poor and fleeced the toiling anxious merchant on his homeward road, coming down sharply upon the passing train of mules, and then holding coarse revels in the evil-looking small-eyed castles which skirted the highway. Fierce insurrections of rough peasants, stung by tyranny into sudden heriosm, have starved and burnt them out within their shut portcullis and square donjon keep. Look at the remnant of that grim grey ruin! think you not of the time when the angry cowherds gathered and squatted round it till the once insolent retainers of the feudal lord, now lank and dirty, died hard in the sally, fighting on till yoke and sickle, and club and spade, had beat and cut them down with yells. "A very interesting ruin that," remark the guide-books; "an ass there and back costs 6 francs, not including a buonomano to the driver."

Do let us, though it be not with no memory of distinct historical details, penetrate beneath the thin crust of commonplace walking directions, and look at the shadows of the past which people the country we explore. Let us see immeasurably more than the rude porter who sweats under our knapsack, though he may have traversed every defile, and learnt the name of every peak and nook since he played as a child outside the chalet door, and made dirt pies, in German patois. Here, in the Grisons, you may lay the reins upon the neck of your educated fancy, and see your latest tour accompanied by the dim, but vigorous drama of the bygone years.

But I must come back to the present. The valleys, peaks, and passes, of a district have so much in common that I will content myself with taking you merely into the central and characteristic part of the Grisons, I mean the upper Engadine, leaving you to select from the great variety pointed out by the guide-books, which routes you will follow. We went to the neighbourhood of St. Moritz, which is the best known village of the upper Engadine, by Thusis, and after visiting the Via Mala, struck across the country to Tiefenkasten, where we got into the Julier road and went up the pass in the diligence.

It was a threatening day when we started from

VIA MALA.

the excellent Steinbock Hotel at Coire in a little one-horse chaise for Thusis. We reached it in about three hours, and, after a hasty luncheon, set off to walk through the defile of the Via Mala, which begins at once above the village. We had heard and read so much about the "terrible sublimity" of this famous gorge, that we were rather disappointed with a capital macadamized highway as safe as Piccadilly, although it lies between rugged mountain precipices, which seem sometimes as if they met in front and had swallowed the intruding road which crept within its jaws. But what with bridges, and tunnels, and great grooves along the face of the sheer upright rocks, it dodges and crawls upwards till you look back and admire the labour and skill which permits the heavy diligence to thread its way through such a hopeless looking cleft. We strolled along, now pausing to fix the memory of some sudden corner of the route upon our minds, now to throw pebbles down the gorge; in doing which, I most unluckily, and stupidly, pitched away a pet pencil-case, now to peep over the parapet, where the river rushed immediately under our elbows at a depth of about 400 feet. Close to this spot a bridge steps across the ravine, and even "Balls," whose book is among other things a protest against the sentimental fine writing of "Murray," states that

"the climax of stern sublimity is attained." An old man, who was mending the roads, seeing us approach, waited with a huge stone, ready to heave it over the brink the moment we looked an assent. So we treated ourselves to two pennyworth of the loudest splash I ever heard. The smack of the stone upon the water was like the report of a gun. Then our friend gave a grunt, as if saying "I suppose that is what you like," did a profound obeisance for the twopence, and shambled back to his work.

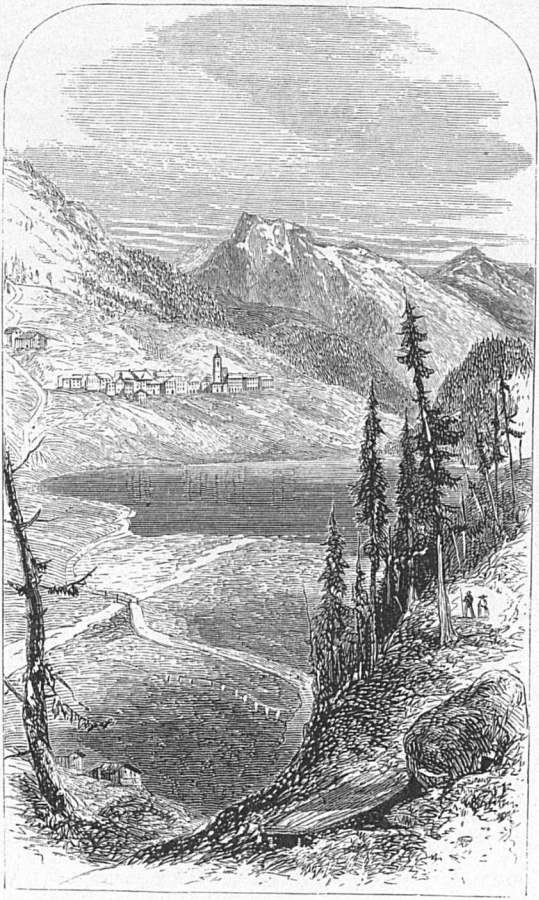
When we returned to Thusis we ordered a horse to be ready for my wife at five the next morning to go to Tiefenkasten betimes, in order to catch the diligence which leaves Coire at the same hour. But when the morning came we found that the people in these parts seem little used to provide fit horses for ladies. The great lumbering brute which we had was not roughed as it ought to have been for steep rock paths, and after a succession of blunders which made me very suspicious, came fairly down on its broadside. Thank God, it fell towards a bank; had it slipped in some of the shelves along which the path crept over the Albula torrent, the horse nor his rider would have been. . . . . My back feels cold now, to think of it. How small a stumble seems when it is harmless. A mere twig, a rotten sod, an ant-hill

alone, often lies betwixt us and the great mystery of the unseen. We recover ourselves. We give a little twist to the left or the right, as it may be, and instead of learning what death means, we grumble because the dinner is late at the inn. It must however be an unwholesome thing to dwell much on the possibility of great danger in small risks, or God would not have made a buoyant enterprising spirit a sign of sound and useful health.

The path from Thusis to Tiefenkasten lies through very beautiful scenery. We reached the latter place just before the diligence, and secured places to St. Moritz. With a team of strong bay horses we ground slowly upward for about six hours, passing through and by a large number of small white-housed villages, and gradually changing the vegetation of the valley for bare peaks and slopes on which not even pines could grow. The last straggling little patches of corn were still quite green, though the harvest had long been reaped on the ripe earth behind us. When we reached the top we began to appreciate the great height at which the valley of the upper Engadine lies. It may almost be said to be at the top of several passes. The first sight of the valley to wards St. Moritz is not promising. The lower hills have a scorched brown look like those about

Como and Maggiore. The only trees are pines, and the surrounding mountains do not strike the visitor as remarkably high. No wonder. St. Moritz itself is between six and seven thousand feet above the sea, so that you see the tops of the mountains rather than the mountains themselves. Indeed, you are occasionally in your walks surprised at finding yourself, while trudging along a broad highway, apparently on a level with glaciers. Thus, though the Engadine, especially the neighbourhood of St. Moritz, is a favourite resort of mountaineers, it is peculiarly fitted for those who seek mountain air but do not climb. The Engadine is a long plateau up in the clouds. You can drive about on a level above the top of the Righi, and if you want extensive views, you have only to tell the coachman to take you to the edge of one of the passes which lead to it, and then you can look down grand valleys to your heart's content.

But I must get back to the diligence. Soon after we had begun to descend from the top of the Julier Pass, the conducteur said, "there are the Baths of St. Moritz," and we saw beneath us a large building like a union-house in a fir plantation. When we stopped at the village, which is about 600 feet above the baths, we found the inns full, so we drove on to Samâden, about four miles further, and the chief town of the upper Engadine,



ST. MORITZ.

and met with the same answer. This was not pleasant; however, we got a small bedroom in the village and turned in, glad of rest, but a trifle cross at meeting with a succession of negatives. A little thing sets you against a spot from which you expect great enjoyment. A toothache would poison Paradise. The impression I received of the place during the night led me, however, to anticipate at least an atmosphere of excessive deliberation and contentment. Two town clocks, close to our room, struck the hour so slowly that none but the most phlegmatic people could endure such provoking sluggishness. I chanced once to wake in the dark, and the first began. "Ding". . . "One o'clock I suppose," thought I turning round, ... "Dong" came another stroke, "two clocks here," I muttered, "both make it out one o'clock," and I settled down to sleep, beginning to count to myself in order that I might coax back the startled god of sleep. When I had got to fifteen, "Dong" went the clock again. I went on counting, and after reaching fifteen more, "DING," said the bell, taking breath. It was four o'clock; presently the second town clock began, and I counted nineteen between each stroke. "This is a deliberate place," I thought, and fell asleep. When I woke in the morning light, I saw just over my head a portrait of some native in a cinna-

mon-coloured coat with high collar, a face with a slow wise smile, and hair combed down over the forehead. In the upper corner of the picture there was written in large yellow characters "Mon bonheur est parfait." So I hailed the good omen, and we went to the inn for breakfast. After this we drove to Pontresina, and secured a room at the "Krone," looking up the Roseg valley upon the snows of the Bernina range. Here we staid a week making excursions in the neighbourhood, and appreciating the keen air of this elevated spot.

There are plenty of walks and climbs, short and long, easy and hard, to be taken from this village. I will not risk the monotony of daily excursions which you can extemporise for yourself or learn from the guide-books; but ask you only to accompany me up the Piz Languard and the Morteratsch Glacier, which characterize the neighbourhood.

The Piz Languard, which is nearly eleven thousand feet high, rises behind the village of Pontresina, and you begin to mount close by the old church, which is a short way off on the Bernina road. The ascent takes from three to four hours, and the path is plainly marked, so that no man at all accustomed to find his own way need take a guide, except, may be, to carry his coat and his luncheon. The view from it has been compared to that from the Aeggischorn, but wrongly. There

you do not see the view for which you mount till you reach the summit. The last step reveals it. Here you climb with the chief view in sight almost all the way. Both the hills look down on glaciers, and they are both rather roughish at top, but in other respects the panorama from their summits differs more than that from most mountains of about the same height in the midst of high Alpine scenery. The Piz Languard is loftier than the Aeggischorn.

I will not again describe a thing which is so common in Switzerland as a climb like this. It took me two hours and fifty minutes, including halts, from the inn door at Pontresina to the tip of the Piz; but then I walked fast, as the sun was getting low, and I wanted a good view before it set. There was not a cloud upon any of the hundred of peaks which rose around except upon the Orteler Spitz. Close beneath, or rather in front of me, was the white Bernina range, away in the dim distance I could just make out Monte Rosa. Behind me lay the Tyrol. The panorama was superb. I was quite alone. Far below me, though still at a considerable height, were two Bergamesque shepherds watching their flocks, and stalking about in picturesque simplicity. These men often sleep out on the hill-side, and wear a melodramatic brigand dress. They are, however,

civil industrious fellows, and very dirty. No doubt an hereditary national costume is often becoming, but it grows deplorably foul with the wear of successive possessors. There is something to be said for cheap flimsy clothes; they fall to pieces soon, whereas a sheepskin coat descends to the son with the savour of his father as well as his blessing. The atmosphere or halo of smell round some of these goatherds, and guides too, is really sometimes curious. The other day I was in rope with a man who carried for his own refreshment, among other things a huge piece of acridly rank cheese and a flask of absinthe. When he sat down to lunch, the combination of flavours which floated around him was horrible.

But I must get down from the Piz Languard. This I did quickly, for the day was closing in and I did not wish to be caught by the dusk on the mountain.

Next morning, Sunday, we found a powdering of snow on the grass below our windows, and while we were walking back from St. Moritz, where we went to service, which was held in a room at the bath-house, the flakes fell with as angry and biting a wind as would have satisfied February itself. Perhaps they are such apparently unseasonable days as these which give the chief charm to Swiss travel. The order of our annual

sensations is so rudely interrupted that the dullest mind is at least woke up and discomfited if not immediately refreshed. All at once the procession is broken into, summer thoughts are upset, and the experience of a whole life is put out of joint. A week before this we had been sweltering in the plains. The dog-days had set in with promise of long heat. When lo! having gone innocently to sleep, and taken off the great feather-bed laid on our quilt as too hot for summer, we find ourselves in the morning as cold as a French dinner-plate, and see our noses blue in the looking-glass. No wonder! the mercury in the thermometer has shrunk down to 36°, and the grass is powdered with white. Yes, positively it is. You have come into a parenthesis of ice and snow in the middle of a broiling August.

Before we leave Pontresina we will take a walk up the Morteratsch Glacier. This is a regular excursion from the place, but we made it with a different aim to that of common tourists. We went to look for a watch.

Some three weeks before this a mighty climber, whom I will call the Professor, was descending from the Piz Morteratsch upon the glacier of the same name. Jenni was chief guide, and two gentlemen with another guide (I forget his name), completed the party of five. They came to a

steep ice couloir which the Professor suggested to Jenni was unsafe; but Jenni began to make preparations for the attempt. Again the Professor drew Jenni's attention to the business which, however easy to such experts as themselves, was a far more serious affair to less practised mountaineers. But Jenni was confident and off they set, crossing the couloir (which is like a broad gully of snow on ice tilted up to an angle of some 45° or more) diagonally. When they had got some way Jenni, who was leading, looked back and bade the hindmost men plant their footsteps carefully in those of their predecessors (good conservative advice at all ticklish times, political or alpine). The words had no sooner passed his lips than the three hinder men came by the Professor and Jenni as if they had been turned out of a sack, higgledy-piggledy over head over heels. They had started an avalanche, and now it rested with the Professor and Jenni, with the cool head and skilful arms which God gives to mountaineers, to stop not only their friends, but if possible the avalanche too. Away they went, whirling down, the Professor and Jenni manfully driving the sticks of their ice axes into the snow. Bump! they had jolted over a crevasse. There was another in front. Jenni, without a moment to weigh the pros and cons, hurled himself into it head first,

hoping thus to hang the party, which of course was roped together, on the lip of the crevasse. But he was chucked up, as a ferret in line might be out of a rabbit hole, and went by the Professor like a projectile. Away they all slid once more, Jenni crying out "Halt! Gesu!" and the Professor, whose advice if followed would have prevented the mischief, striving to check himself in the snow, like Will struggling with Fate. Close below them was a huge bergschrund, or crevasse of the first order. They stopped five seconds short of it, having been shot down nearly 1000 feet.

This marvellous escape was of course soon known at Pontresina. One day I accompanied a party to the Roseg glacier, when a gentleman pressed the Professor to give an account of the accident. I was glad to hear him make this request, for I had a sneaking desire to hear the Professor's story, and yet shrank from asking him questions about it. There are things of which a man's mind is full, and of which nevertheless, he hesitates to speak. However, this gentleman asked the Professor for the story, and I heard it. Anything more simply vivid I never listened to. It was told without the shadow of effort, but with the inspiration of graphic consciousness. He could not tell it again as he did then as we walked under the pine-trees in the Roseg Valley. We

saw the whole thing. There was not a weak nor swelled word in the record of the escape. He simply opened the trapdoor of his memory and showed us the photograph of the scene.

Well, after the accident, the Professor found a bit of his watch-guard dangling round his neck, but his watch, a valuable one, gone. And while we were staying at Pontresina, it was proposed to have an expedition to search for it, though to pick such a little dot as á Geneva watch out of the debris of an avalanche, seemed a hopeless attempt. Still, the attempt involved a pleasant excursion, and gave a fresh edge to the object of our walk. There were (counting Jenni and Michel, the guides), eight of us, and we started at six o'clock in the morning. About an hour, spent mainly in crossing some pleasant meadows, brought us to the foot of the glacier. Ascending its left bank for some way we took to the ice, which was as hard as glass, and I felt as I walked gingerly up its rounded margin, like Gulliver ascending the shoulder of a Brobdinag black bottle. However, there was very fair going for an hour and a half, till we came to some crevasses, across which the Professor decided that we colts should be roped. Being merely a common tramp myself, I was not sorry to hear this decision come to, especially as I was unwell and shaky on my legs. I had walked

over much worse places without thinking about the rope, but illness changes the whole world around you, and though I hope I did not betray it grossly, I was very far from well. Therefore I was heartily glad to be put in rope, and with the others was helped by Jenni and Michel over several of the more steep and slippery steps. At last we wound our way out of the crevasses, and, climbing a steep shoulder of the rocks on its left back, sat down to lunch.

Here Mr. N., Mr. P., and I stopped while the rest of the party went about an hour further to look for the watch. The view from our waiting-place was magnificent. We had ascended the Morteratsch glacier, and now looked close and full into the theatre of white snow mountains from which it descends. Will you believe it, we told stories and longed for—beer. We said the spectacle was superb; we knew that we were horribly thirsty. There was not a drop of water within reach; and so we wished and interchanged the most touching expression of our wishes—for beer. But "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing." So says Solomon. Had we climbed on we should have been thirsty, no doubt, but we should have been occupied. However, I'm glad I stopped, for one, for I wanted to rest.

When we had waited about two hours and a half,

we heard a great snort, and there was Jenni fifty yards off just coming round the corner, capering heavily about, like a rhinoceros in liquor. They had found the watch. When the party which left us reached the ruin of the avalanche, they paused while the guides went up the slope. In a short time Michel came upon the watch. There it lay, having ticked the store of its little life out scrupulously. There it lay upon the snow perfectly clean, and bright, and sound. The Professor had his key with him, and wound it up while we all were eating our dinner. Yes! tick, tick, tick. . . the brave little watch roused itself to its dull but useful work, and began telling off the seconds with patient regularity at once. You should have seen Jenni! He snorted, and smoked, and listened, and ate a leg of mutton, and drank a pail of kirsch, and gambolled about with an air of ponderous gaiety, which was exhibited wholly for his own relief, and would have been steadily gone through if he had been quite alone.

A word more about Jenni. He is a remarkable character. One day at our inn door, the Professor introduced him (in English, of which he did not understand a word), to some ladies in a carriage. "Ladies," said the Professor, "I beg to introduce to you the ugliest man, and the best guide in the Engadine." And Jenni, vainly unconscious of the

left-hand barrel of the compliment, smiled a great smile which travelled round the back of his red neck, and made a leg. Such a leg! With his boots on he could, I imagine, have kicked a hole in the Warrior target.

But Jenni is, no doubt, though grumpy and selfish, a first-rate guide, and nothing could have been higher than the praise which the Professor bestowed upon him for his pluck, endurance, and skill.

After dinner, we walked slowly down along the rocks on the left bank of the glacier to Pontresina, stopping every now and then to enjoy the view, which was glorious. I do not know how many places we fixed upon as sites for an hotel, but really there are spots in the neighbourhood, to be made accessible by bridle-paths, in which an hotel would command all the orders of the season in the Engadine, and be head-quarters for mountaineers. Thus we chatted down to Pontresina, which we reached at six, having been out twelve hours, nine of which were stiffish walking for one ridiculously out of training. The invigorating air of Pontresina, however, showed itself in the fact that a gentleman, as fine an old English gentleman as you please to picture, between sixty and seventy years of age, who was so indisposed a month before, that he doubted whether he could make

the journey between London and Paris, formed one of our party and did the day's work gloriously. Next morning we idled. There are very few books at these country inns, but tourists occasionally shed some used up volumes from place to place, and here I found 'Lady Audley's Secret,' which I read through for the second time. The chief advantage of such works as these is the speed at which their memory evaporates. I had wholly forgotten the plot of this, and it did over again as well as ever, for a sensation. Now a few weeks has already clouded my remembrance of the story. I only know that you are always tottering on the brink of some awful surprise, or tumbling topsy-turvy into the depths of some fashionable felony. Put these stories by, and they will fizz and sparkle as fiercely as ever when you draw the cork again.

I have said that there are many excursions to be made from Pontresina. I will leave you to read about them in the guide-books. I revisited the Morteratsch glacier with my wife. These walks show something fresh every time you repeat them. Coming home that day across the meadows, we passed through a herd of calves. They looked so gentle and inquiring that I said to my wife, they know we have some biscuits in our pockets, and I held one out. Up rushed a dozen calves and followed us like dogs, pushing and almost

scrambling for scraps. When I sat down to feed them, they shoved their cool noses into my lap as if it were a manger, after the very slightest apology for introducing themselves. The Swiss are generally kind to their beasts, and though they often address very severe language to their horses, seldom ill-treat them.

After a week we shifted our quarters to St. Moritz, where we found a very pleasant room and good fare at the Engadiner Külm, the chief inn in the village, and, to my taste, much better than the hugh bath-house with its *table d'hôte* for three hundred persons and crowd of semi-fashionable foreigners. Not but that there were plenty of the latter at the village. They formed some three-fourths of the guests at our inn, and one young lady, who they said was a Russian princess, whisked about and chattered so incessantly, that she alone might have counted for a dozen. She almost always turned up opposite us at table, and apparently wore a fresh dress at every meal, so badly put on, and so ill-chosen, that she seemed each time to have reached the bottom of unhappy taste, and then with a marvellous buoyancy of descent, ever displayed a deeper sense of millinery discord. But the inn was invariably comfortable. The Pontresina arrangements possibly made us enjoy it the more. There, at Pontresina, the

victuals were too greasy and garlicky to our taste; but the worst of it was, that except at the regular meals you could get none. Of course there was always bread and cheese—the last execrable, and beer; but unless you dined at one o'clock you went without dinner, and unless you supped at seven you could not make up for the loss of the former meal. At St. Moritz you had simple plenty when you pleased. At least so it seemed to us. While there we several times visited the bath-house, and drank the waters. They are delicious; far too nice for medicine, though they are said to perform great cures. They combine the finest flavour of the best soda and seltzer water, iced. There is a keen refreshing edge to them which spreads all over your being and sharpens you up at once.

St. Moritz lies in the string of villages which thread the Engadine Valley. These villages, which succeed each other closely, consist of a few large stone whitewashed houses with green shutters and enormous brass bell-pulls or knockers. Many of them must contain a large number of rooms, and indicate considerable wealth in their inhabitants. But as nothing, outside a few poor patches of kitchen garden, grows in the upper Engadine but grass and fir, not even potatoes, much less corn; and as nothing, apparently, is

made there but a little hay and a few roads, one wonders how the people can afford to live in such important-looking houses. The fact is this; the secrets of confectionary are known to the natives, and they spread themselves in early manhood over Europe, where they carry on a lucrative trade in most of its large cities. Then they return with their pockets full, build big white houses, all alike, grow fat, have their portraits painted, sit in the Engadine vestry for the rest of their lives, and squabble in Romansch about the turnpike road and parish rights.

The landlord of our inn, Herr Badrütt, is a spirited far-sighted member of their community. On the Sunday which we spent at St. Moritz, several members of the congregation remained after service and formed themselves into a committee to build an English church near the village. The number of English visitors increases fast every year, and the place promises to be a second Chamouni. Well, when he knew our business Herr Badrütt gave a piece of ground as a site for our church, and I hope there will be in a year or two a suitable building in which the English visitors can worship. More than 100 pounds was collected while we were there. The site of the proposed little church is a lovely one, by the lake side, halfway between the village and

the bath-house. The total cost of the building will be about 500 pounds.

Now I will tell you of a regular drive or walk from St. Moritz, and then leave the Engadine. There are plenty of others, but I will confine myself to this one, because it exhibits a speciality of the place the like of which I know of nowhere else in Switzerland. Not that there is any romance or adventure in it, for it might be taken in a cab, but it shows how fine elevated mountain air and scenery may be enjoyed comfortably by those who cannot walk, even along a turnpike road.

One bright breezy day my wife and I set off on foot to the summit of the Maloya Pass. She was unable to walk further than Silva Plana, the nearest village on the great road which threads the valley, about an hour off. Getting there I stepped into the inn and asked for a little one-horse chaise to take us on some hour and a half further. The landlord, a fat tanned man, was smoking in the bar, and suggested that although he had not a regular chaise disengaged, he would drive us himself in his own, for the pleasure of it. "And" said he, with a ponderous wink, "you must give me a buonomano, for I shall be postilion." Of course the idea of his being rated as a postilion, he the landlord, the great man, the squire, to whom the men mending the road touched their hats, was a prodigious joke. But,

as he talked a sort of Romansch Italian, he suddenly seemed to fear he was misunderstood, and was really about to be taken for a groom in the presence of the hostlers and barman. Alarm spread over his face when I solemnly took out my purse and began to fish for a coin. "Oh no!" he cried in some stumbling apologetic language. "Oh no! ha! ha!" and he waved away my searching gesture with a protest. I happened to have a silbergroschen in my purse which was so very small and thin that you could take it up with the tip of your wetted finger, as the Brobdignag farmer did Gulliver's money when he emptied it, on his palm, out of his purse. Our fat friend was therefore delighted when I presented him with this, gravely remarking that so big a man ought to be paid in big coin. I had not misunderstood his joke. He was not humbled before his under-strappers, and clapped me on the shoulder in hearty enjoyment of the skill with which he considered that I had interpreted his wit. We were capital friends and talked all the way to the Maloya and back again like two mill clappers.

But about the view. The road runs by the margin of a string of lakes, which lie on your left hand. Beyond them rise mountains capped with snow and streaked with glaciers. On your right are huge broken cliffs of rock, showing every strange outline of rough grandeur. Before you a

succession of horizons marked with water, pine, crag, and ice, keep the eyes open for the next turn in the road. At the end of your drive you come upon the lip of a mighty valley sloping downwards into Italy and descending, within rifle-shot, deeper than you could get if you were to turn your horse round and drive thirty miles down the Engadine. There! I can't describe it. It was one of Martin's pictures, We sat down on the sharp brink of a cliff, while the landlord rested his horse, and watched the white zigzag road creep down to the olive and fig-tree from the edge of the bleak rock-skirted plateau which we had traversed. If you take this drive stop at Santa Maria as you return, and dine or get your tea. This is a small village just off the main route, and famous for its coffee, cream, and scenery. They are all excellent.

We lunched at Silva Plana, where we dismissed our landlord, and walked back to St. Moritz delighted. The bread and butter of these parts is capital. Having no flour of their own the Engadine people buy the best while they are about it.

And now we will make our bow to them. I am writing at Basle, in a bright bedroom looking out over the Rhine and waiting for the express which starts for Paris to-night. The Regular Round demanded that we should cross the Bernina Pass to La Prese, or at least Poschiavo, then turn up to-

wards the Stelvio, short of the top of which there is a path into the Munster Thal, whence there is a long walk to Zernett at the bottom of the upper Engadine. A little way above Zernett you ought to turn off by the Albula pass towards Coire and visit Davos before you leave this part of the Grisons. You see I know the way, and indeed seem to myself to have taken it in the order I have put down; but "circumstances," among which was a break-up of the weather, made us lose the latter portion of the regular Grisons tour. But the Engadine is the speciality of the district, and that made so lively an impression upon us that I hope I may have been able to convey something of it to yourself. The weather changed and we went back by diligence to Coire, swinging down the zigzags at a spanking pace, which made the lumbering vehicle roll like a barge in a swell. By degrees we crept into vegetation. Little patches of corn still green, though the wide golden fields had already been reaped in the ripe earth beneath us, passed the windows of the diligence. Down, down, down, racing with the tumbling torrent which ran by our roadside. Down, down, to Tiefenkasten, where the sun was hot, and we got comfortably warmed through once more after the frost and snow of St. Moritz.

We visited the solemn high-cliffed Lake of Wallenstadt on our way back, and rested two days

in sunny Zurich. We were delighted with Zurich. The dinners indeed at the Hotel Baur were too long—these slow meals keep the digestive forces under arms till they are tired,—but the view down the lake was very good. There is a place above the town which shows the character of the scenery, and made us think that the special glory of high mountains is not seen while you are upon them.

Beneath is the town with its clean walled streets and spires, then the lake with creeping pleasure-boats and sloping shores dotted with houses, and trees. Then purple horizons, each with its own mountain edge. Then the distance and hazy mist. But above all, clear against the sky, far above the clouds, rises a sharp-jagged white-patched line. That is the Alps. Yes, that is a line of hard stone, crowned with unmeasured miles of ice and snow, standing up royally through the thin soft veil of cloud which lies upon the earth. So we saw it on the last lovely day before we took our tickets by the express, and were whisked here to Basle on our way to Charing Cross. And it seemed to say a parable as we looked our last. And the interpretation thereof was in this wise:

That the great human ranges in the skyline of the past are thus seen across the dim ages behind us. Were we on those heights of rock and ice we should be giddy, hurt, may be dashed to death. But distance hides the roughness of their face:

we can gaze upon their cliffs and peaks with even breath and steady eye. So now we look back upon the great men and peoples who are the peaks and masses in the Alps of history. While they struggle in the pangs of growth, or split in the storm, we common people of the crowd feel small and blind; but now, sitting on our little mound in the still sunshine of rest, we plainly see the marks they have set upon the earth and admire the greatness, the danger, and the glory of their rise or fall.

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